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PUNCH

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The London Charivari

MR. ANTONY HOLLAND, who intends to stand for East Grinstead as a Whig, seems rather surer about Whig principles than ever Whigs were. Whigs, he says, are believers in freedom, private property and proportional representation; and against the two-party system, punitive taxation, bureaucracy and the Liberal party. To be fair it is just possible to discern a sort of continuity between these tenets and those of the eighteenth-century politicians who were believers in freedom for their own supporters, private property belonging to big Whigs, and representation by a large proportion of Whigs; and against anything but a one-party system, punitive taxation of Whigs, and the Tory party. But it will be difficult to believe that Mr. Holland is a thorough-going Whig until he tries to sell his vote to the Duke of Newcastle.

Life in the Old Lion Yet

WITH our intentions viewed with coolness in Washington, suspicion in the Middle East, caution in Moscow and scepticism in Africa, our nante mud in Bonn, and reports of Anglophobia



from Paris, many Britons had a touch of the old, forgotten swagger about them last week.

His Captain's Hand . . .

SECOND to no man in my admiration for England's soccer captain Billy

Wright, I have been more than a little surprised to read that his earliest mentors were able to forecast fame and glory at the eleven-plus stage. Moreover this startling prescience is supported by a miraculously efficient filing system. "The other day," Mr. Wright's former form master writes in the *Express*, "I turned up an old exercise book of Billy's and smiled when I saw the pages were interspersed with football jottings . . ." And then even more surprising to an old dominie like me is the master's pay-off: "I also think of the last words I wrote on Billy's last school report—A TYPICAL ENGLISH SCHOOLBOY. GOOD OLD BILL."

New Threat

GENERAL relief that the Dalai Lama was now safe from attack and pursuit



faded a little with the report from Delhi that "some two hundred journalists" were converging on him to sign him up for "exclusive articles."

Hole in the Charter?

THE B.B.C. take more and more time advertising themselves on their own channels. Could they buy time on I.T.V.? Their activities are restricted by a number of regulations which have changed slowly through the years. Never since the original agreements between the Post Office and the radio



"When's the next Budget?"

industry have they been able to broadcast advertisements, though down to 1936 they could handle sponsored programmes. Harrods did one in 1923 and there were a few in the next year or so; but the B.B.C. never liked sponsored programmes—too unReithian—and the prohibition did not trouble them when it came. However, if they cannot take money for advertising other people they seem to be able to pay money to advertise themselves. They are allowed to compile and distribute books and "other material as may be conducive to any of the objects of the Corporation." If licence-holders kicked at the cost of buying time on the rival channel the commercial boys wouldn't lose by running some of their trailers free.

Bomb Story

LAST week's Oscar for the most dramatic bomb story went unquestionably to the *Star*, whose reporter described the South Bank discovery as "the bomb that made London hold its breath for ten hours." Poor, rusty old Hermann was found at 1.20 a.m. and removed at about 11 o'clock in the morning, so that London must either get up earlier than one had supposed or else achieve the feat of holding its breath in its sleep for a good two-thirds of its total apnoeic period. As a matter

of fact, not *all* London held its breath even momentarily—not even at the crisis of what the *Evening News* called "The Battle of the Bomb: Phase Two," when Major Hartley tried to lever off the base-plate. Regular visitors to the nearby Festival Hall calmly reminded themselves that a bomb which had remained inert through the climaxes of (e.g.) Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony was not likely to respond to the Major's mild obbligation on hammer and chisel.

Different Story

PAPERS gave only minor coverage to the adventure of Sir Arthur Warner, Minister of Transport, Victoria, when he had to swim for the shore after the capsizing of his yacht *Winston Churchill*. If it had been the *Arthur Warner* that had capsized, and . . .

Prayer Granted

"AT last—the story millions have begged for!" is how a woman's magazine announces in spacious advertisements publication of a Gracie Fields saga. To find a parallel to such a mass plea springing from a sense of deprivation I have had to go back to 1751 when England adopted the Gregorian Calendar and mobs of people paraded the streets shouting "Give us back our eleven days." If there was an Aldermaston-type march to Watford, where the journal is printed in photogravure, to demand that suppression of

this story should cease, I missed it. This gargantuan if hitherto inarticulate petition must rank for size with the subject of Gracie Fields' own memorable comedy number "The Biggest Aspidistra in the World."

Naked Aggression

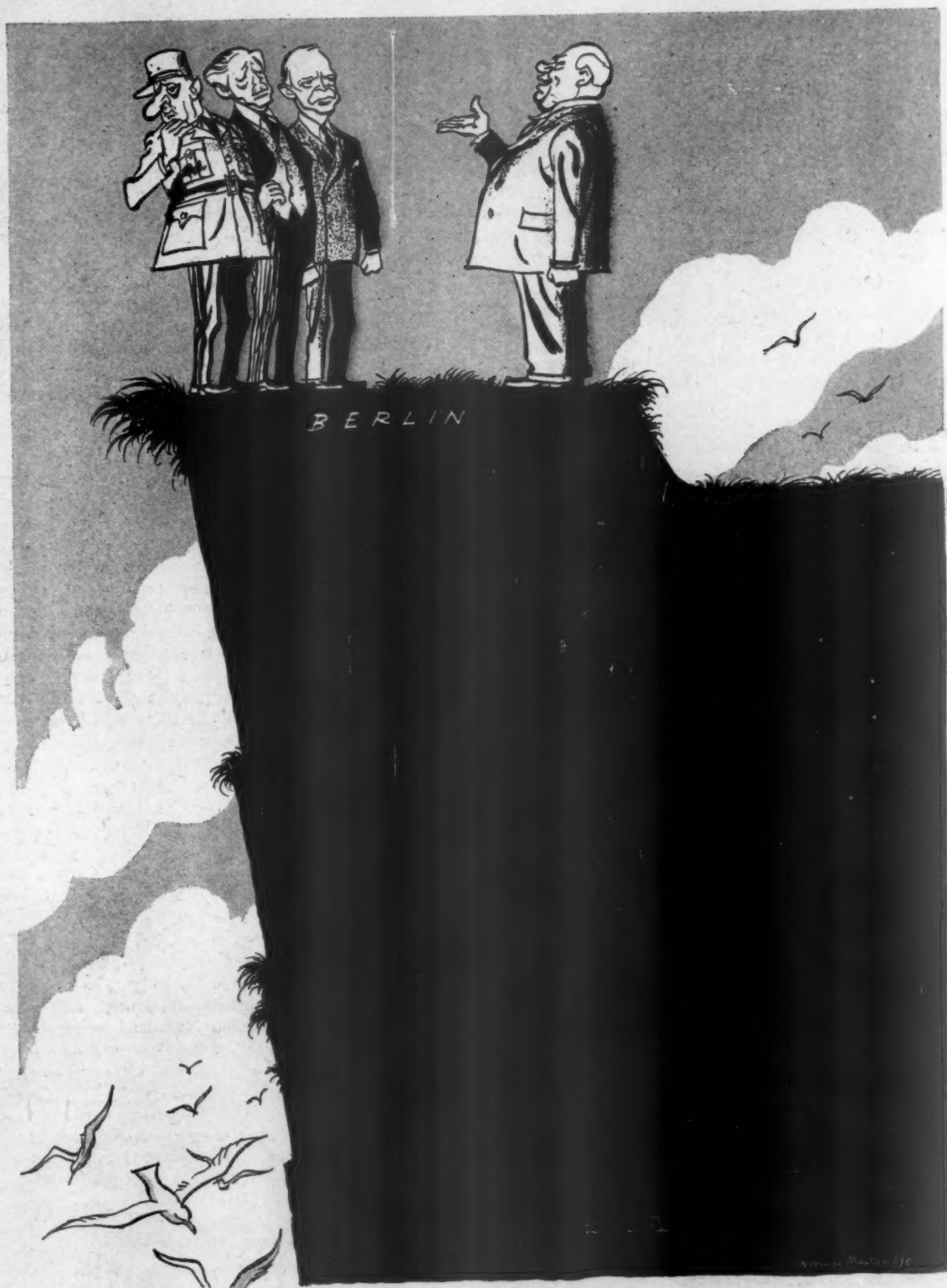
I SEE the Doukhobors have been stripping for victory again. Three hundred of them undressed at a meeting in Krastova, British Columbia, in protest against the Canadian Government's unwillingness to allow their leader to return from Uruguay, where he had gone to find them a new home. The Doukhobors, or Sons of Freedom, originally stripped their way from Russia to Canada in the 'nineties, and were recently reported to be considering making the return journey, as the Canadians were getting tired of their refusal to pay taxes or send their children to school and their tiresome habits of setting fire to public buildings and standing about naked whenever they wanted to raise a point of order. Their present leader has been on his mission to Uruguay since 1952, so it looks as if they may have lost both him and their national home. May I humbly suggest that they sound the Duke of Bedford over the possibility of finding accommodation at Woburn?

Been Here Before?

NOT that I would wish to worry you, but I'm inclined to pass on a pessimistic friend's observation that things are getting to be remarkably pre-war. We have Vicky in Low's spot in the *Evening Standard*, annoying its readers in the same way, and we have Randolph Churchill in his father's spot there; we have processions in the Trafalgar Square district, with banners concerning Nyasaland where in 1936 and 1937 they concerned Spain; there is the same sort of argument about the publication of *Lolita* as there was then about that of *Ulysses*; and now again the papers are printing, just as they did then, long sets of questions with the help of which you can psychoanalyse yourself. We may not get hasty trenches in the London parks as we did in 1938, but any moment now my friend expects a house-to-house distribution of pocket geiger-counters—to give the same kind of reassurance as those dear old gas-masks, and for just about as long.



"Now just forget about Tibet, Berlin, Iraq, the Summit . . ."



"Why don't we all step back a pace?"

CRADLE TO UNIVERSITY



8 The Sporting Code

By ALAN ROSS

THROW a child a bat and you are supposed to be able to tell by the way he picks it up whether he's going to be a cricketer or not. That may be true, though my own child of five has hitherto picked it up only to fling it farther. Still, I have hopes of him, knowing that from the age of eight to the age of twenty I thought of very little else, and that throughout my childhood, sport in one form or another was both my solace and my joy.

It is these very hopes of a father's for his son that, we are often instructed, do such damage. "Just because you were good at cricket it doesn't mean Jasper has to be." My own son is not called Jasper, but the principle holds good. I certainly hope he will be, but I shall contain my disappointment if he is not. And I won't beat him. In fact if he prefers bird-watching and gets as much pleasure from that as I got, and get, from cricket I shall be only too happy to learn from him. For the point about sport is that it is a supreme aid, in that it gives pleasure, to the business of living. It has long since, among all classes of English, taken the place of religion. I doubt very much whether it has been a change for the bad, taking the historical view, and Marx might have feared and suspected it even more.

It is commonly supposed that the elevation of sport into a religion at public and preparatory schools has been responsible not only for much unhappiness but for the shortcomings of our Colonial servants. The corruption of values that has brought more prestige to a university Blue than to one who has acquired a Double First is, I suppose, much to be deplored: though such things are a training for life, they are an introduction to the ways of the world and nothing after all is for ever. The individual soon learns for himself

the value of his achievement, and the truth is that some have their moment of glory early and some later.

Another aspect of sport much criticized is that in the eyes of many educationists it is conducive to character building while scholarship is not. Indeed it is considered as a kind of therapy, a stimulation of the good in us, a suppression of the evil. For public schoolboys and prisoners alike, athletic activity keeps at bay the forces of darkness. "The development of character" is a favourite phrase in school prospectuses, and we take it to mean that a nice boy, whose manners are good and whose heart is in the right place, is preferable to a studious one. If he shines at nothing in particular his parents need not lose heart. What some fear, however, is that it is just "character building," this elevation of ordinariness and conventionality into a virtue, that is the trouble. It will lead to intolerance, jingoism, distaste for the arts, perhaps even racial hatred. Schoolboys are very prone to draw all the wrong conclusions, and schoolmasters, currying favour, only too eager to pander to prejudice rather than attempt to eradicate it. The individualist must always face martyrdom, and in the matter of education, as in religious matters, authority is often stern, disciplinarian and hostile to change.

Thus the progressive parent has certain fixed images in his head: the god-like veneration of the sporting "bloods," both

by masters and by boys, the fawning on him by the youngest, who treasure a chip from his bat or the mud from his boots, and somehow, as a kind of undertone to all this, the development of a regard for what is by its nature meretricious and false. On the other hand they envisage the precocious child, sensitive and advanced in his views, sitting alone in his corner, at intervals getting an inkwell thrown at him or having his elbow twisted—simply because he is no good at games, because he is a "nonconformer." To wilder minds a junior master is there watching it all, egging on the insults and the jibes, even muttering "Serves him right for not pulling his weight."

I suppose there have been schools like this, and certainly there are those who have felt themselves inferior because



"And stop referring to your mother as the Establishment."



"A touch of spring and bang go our back-row patrons."

they failed to excel at games. Whether they developed a complex about this is less predictable. There can be few of us who do not feel inept at one thing or another, be it our inability to mend a fuse or to sit through a Wagnerian opera. And to a certain extent our status in the eyes of our fellow creatures depends on the value they put on those particular activities to which we lend support or achieve distinction. Since, whether we like it or not, we are social beings, dependent in the community on the efforts of one another, it is natural that those activities which benefit and bring honour to the group will be considered

the most highly. It is this impossibility for the individual to detach himself from the community that, for example, makes the position of the conscientious objector ambiguous in modern warfare. We cannot survive as individuals without help from the community, though we are free to exercise our free will, whatever the circumstances. Unhappily, conformity is a price we may, voluntarily or involuntarily, need to pay.

Sporting values, the creation of an élite, an educational system which emphasizes the value of this conformity—"team spirit"—it has all been divided often enough, and even at universities

enlarged further into the division between "hearties" and "aesthetes." There is even something ridiculous, to certain eyes, about grown-ups playing games at all. "I'm grown-up, ergo I do not play." Play is for children. Well, it is understandable enough, we all generalize from our limitations and there is no one who is not sometimes absurd in the eyes of another.

Yet, and again one can only speak from personal experience, I cannot find it in me to regard the sporting daydream of my youth as a waste of time. Those who get the most pleasure out of sport are often the worst at it, and I have



"But I always thought you were a Tory."

never encountered a system of values that discriminated against the less successful. Curiously, those qualities that I find least attractive—arrogance, snobbishness, intolerance, rigidity of outlook, meanness of spirit—I have detected more often among soi-disant intellectuals than among sportsmen. For sport is a great leveller, it breeds acceptance of defeat, it demands generosity of outlook. It is often complained that Englishmen, especially, make a fetish of games, and perhaps sometimes they do. But to make a fetish of a thing is often no more than to wish to do it well. The playing of games at its higher levels is a complex, beautiful thing, to observe which is to share in a poetic activity. The division between sport and art is a false one, for anyone who has played any game even tolerably

well knows that his pleasure in it is more æsthetic than competitive. "The poetry" of this, "the art" of that, sport—these are not really idle terms. A child's lyrical and visual sense are probably more developed through the disciplines of sport than through any other early activity. The acquiring of a technique and the subsequent increasingly fluent exercise of it, at an age when other techniques are neither accessible nor pleasurable, means in the formative years a great deal. More than anything, sport is pleasure, it is balance and harmony and rhythm, it is lucidity and order, and not to see it in these terms is to miss the whole point of it. The perfecting of a late cut may be the prelude to the perfecting of a sonnet; and even if it isn't it is something in its own right. The making of beautiful

things, the creating of images in which others may share and take pleasure—these are high and valuable things for men to aspire to, and such craftsmanship and art as they require can be observed in sport as effectively as anywhere. We live, after all, through symbols and by myths and images, some of which detain us longer than others.

I do not think, therefore, that regard for sporting skills at school is misplaced, for it encourages both a sense of performance and a sense of beauty, it requires discipline and effort, even as it rewards them, and it offers that catharsis which was the essential of all great classical drama. There may be, on the humbler levels, more farce than beauty—Wilkins minor falling in a cow-pat in the long-field—but that too is part of it. The vocabulary of sport is large.

No, I have no fears of sport leading astray the young, muffling their anarchy, blanking their intellects, creating false values and slaves to persecution. Rather are my fears the other way. For I understand now that things have changed at school, that nobody knows the names of the eleven, let alone cares, or who is captain of England, or where square leg is. Indeed "square" is about the only familiar term left to the game, and that has been filched for other uses. What I fear is that these arts we have so assiduously practised for so long are growing obsolete, that far from being an élite, sporting heroes are being discriminated against by muscular individualists with anarchic habits, an ear for rock 'n' roll and a distaste for the arts. In which case I hope my son becomes a deviationist.

Other contributors to this series will be:

**The Rev. SIMON PHIPPS
R. G. G. PRICE
C. H. ROLPH
SIR JOHN WOLFENDEN**



"It is significant that on the day that Mr. Steel questions whether teachers—on whose efforts the intellectual, moral and physical progress of our country's youth so largely depend—are worth as much as policemen, Russia announces that she is to spend fifteen times as much as we do on education . . ."—*News Chronicle*

Ah, but how much on policemen?

On the Command "Zero" . . .

By H. F. ELLIS

ORDINARILY one would not pay much attention to a news item beginning "Soldiers of the future may be able to cross hills, rivers and minefields by the use of rockets strapped to their backs." It appears to belong to that wide class of remote possibilities beloved of news editors at a loss for attractive headlines. The use of the word "may" by newspaper correspondents is generally, like the addition of question marks to headlines ("Beetle May Be Cure for Rheumatism?"; "New York to Tokyo in Four Minutes?"), a plain indication to the reader that nothing more will be heard of the matter at least in *his* lifetime. But this item about self-propelled soldiery cannot be so lightly dismissed, for it goes on "Aerojet General Corporation announced in Azusa, California, yesterday that the first production model of such rockets will be ready this year."

This year! Here is no visionary nonsense cooked up out of some scientist's incautious reply to a reporter's question. This is an advanced project, long past the drawing-board stage and approaching, one may guess, the era of tropicalization tests and final decisions on auxiliary straps for men of abnormal build. "Known as the Aeropak" (I am quoting from the *Daily Telegraph* again, with many thanks) "the device is strapped on like a parachute. Hydrogen peroxide under pressure is forced through a silver mesh, which gives the rocket a 300-lb. thrust. This is enough to shoot a man 2,200 feet into the air in twenty seconds." It's uncanny, isn't it, if I may be forgiven a brief interlude, to think that hydrogen peroxide, which I believe to be that stuff in the medicine cupboard that bubbles when applied to cut fingers, has only to be forced through a silver mesh to whoosh you two-thirds of the way up Helvellyn—"or propel him across country at sixty miles an hour. A throttle in his right hand and a lever in his left hand to alter the direction of the jet nozzles enable the flyer to determine his speed and direction."

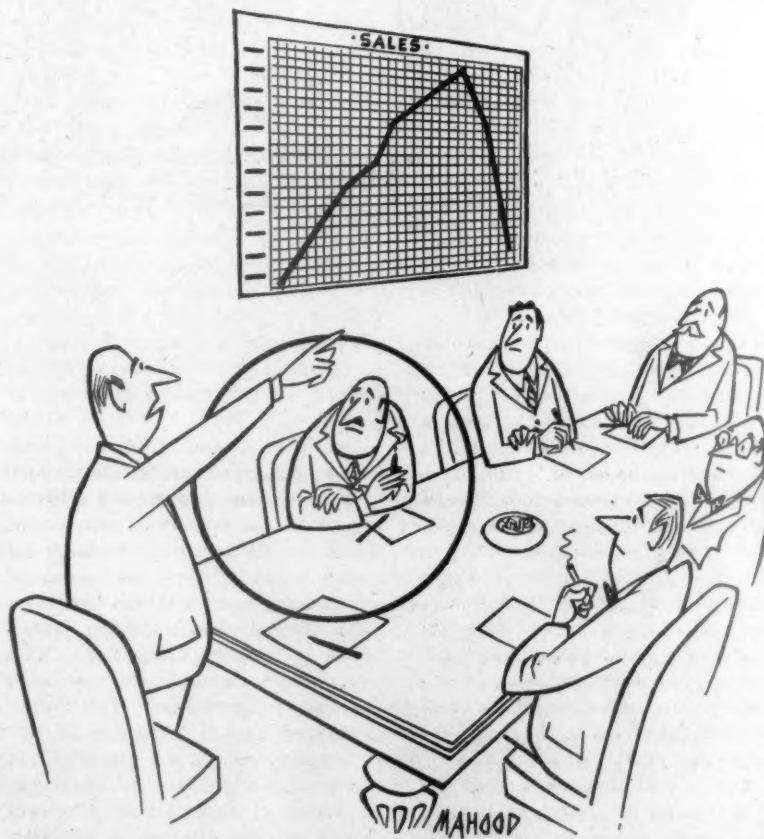
Good. Control of speed and direction is essential in modern warfare, and it is reassuring to know that there is none of that "I shot a soldier into the air. He fell to earth I know not where"

mentality at work in the Aerojet General Corp. Nothing is said about alighting, but we may take it, I think, that the soldier will simply bring himself down to a height of two or three feet over the target area, change direction sharply through 180 degrees and, as soon as his forward momentum is cancelled out by his reverse acceleration so that he is momentarily stationary, switch off and put his feet down. It is true that the manoeuvre would leave him facing the wrong way, but that difficulty could be overcome in the time-honoured way by swivelling on the heel of the right foot and bringing the left foot up smartly alongside. Whatever technical advances science may bring, there will always be room in warfare for the application of first principles and the exercise of personal initiative.

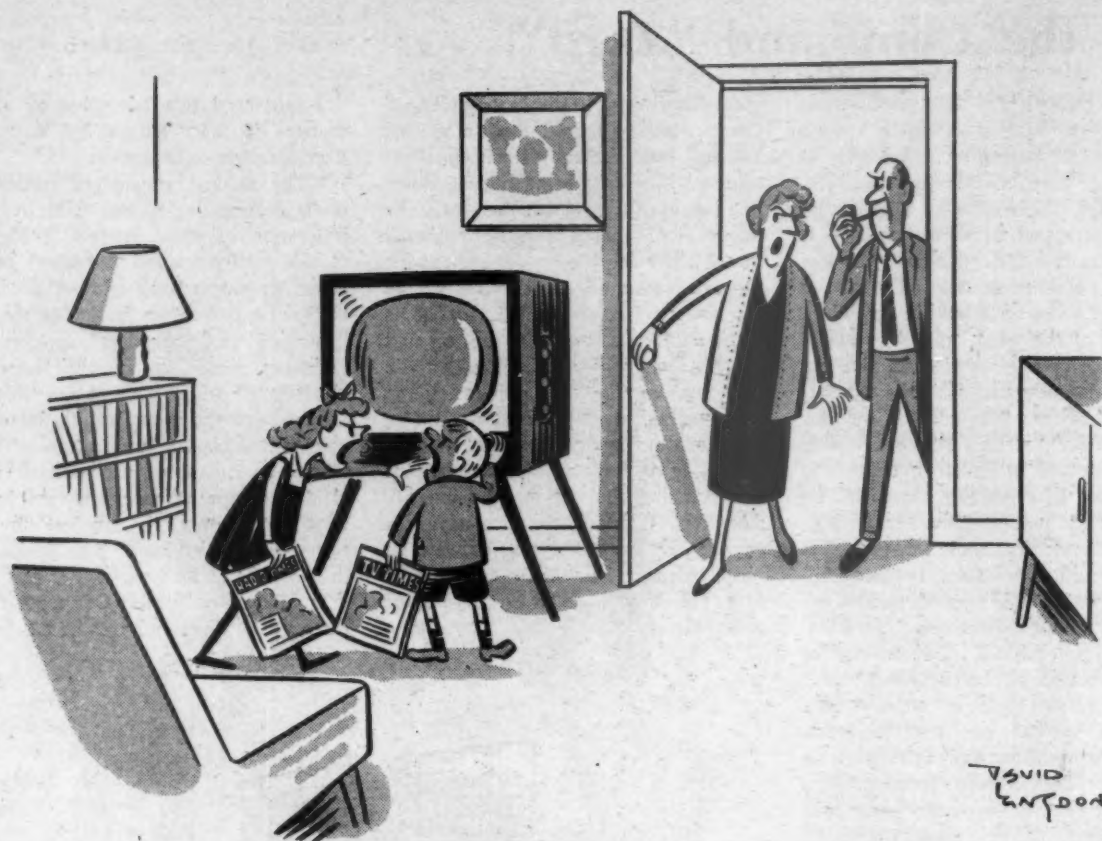
I borrowed that last sentence, as a matter of fact, from *Our Military Correspondent*, who writes:

"The tactical advantages conferred on a commander in the field by the possession of small groups of highly mobile self-propelled infantry seem likely, in conventional warfare at least, to tip the balance in favour of attack. Assuming an adequate supply of hydrogen peroxide in the forward areas, it will be possible at any time to leapfrog over the enemy's static defences and harass his communication with a 60 m.p.h. thrust of well-armed and resolute troops, whose morale will have been heightened in advance by a rocket-assisted take-off. The flexibility thus gained . . ."

To follow *Our Military Correspondent* through the fourteen pages he has been



"Our problem, gentlemen, is to find another use for the hula hoop."



"Now with a Third Network we could really settle their hash."

good enough to write on the subject of flexibility is just, as he himself could not agree more, not on—particularly as *Our Air Correspondent* also writes:

"Vital questions of command are raised by the proposal to launch auto-powered troops through the air against enemy positions. All experience goes to show that isolated sorties of this nature are foredoomed to failure. Attacks, if they are to succeed against the power of modern ground-to-air weapons, will have to be made in strength, and this in turn will call for a high degree of skill in formation flying and concerted airmanœuvre. Quite apart from the technical know-how required to scramble large bodies of men into the air simultaneously, apart also from problems of fuel supply, maintenance of strapping, silver-mesh routine checks, etc., the rocket men will themselves need intensive training in control, navigation, evasive tactics and so on. Such considerations make this clearly an R.A.F.

responsibility. One has only to imagine a lance-corporal attempting to roll off the top of a loop to recognize the perilous absurdity of the Army's claim to control what is after all only a natural development of the old Close Support Group. The paramount importance of flexibility . . ."

Our Naval Correspondent is still only half-way through his paper on the need to keep this new arm as a surprise weapon, to be employed against vital points from submarines operating off enemy coasts, and no announcement has yet been made by Canon Collins on his rumoured plan to lead a protest march to Azusa, California. This leaves me just enough space to quote an important paragraph from *Our Political Correspondent*, who writes:

"Some uneasiness is felt in Whitehall over this new development. So long as the forces of East and West remain aligned at close quarters in Germany there is an obvious risk that troops may

be shot off, either accidentally or through an attack of nerves at subordinate level, into the 'enemy's' positions, thus precipitating a global war. Adequate safeguards, it is insisted, must be provided against fatal indiscretions by 'silver-mesh happy' lieutenants. Preliminary discussions with the United States and Russia on the institution of a peroxide-free zone in Central Europe are likely to be undertaken in the near future, provided agreement can be reached on the technical aspects of one-hundred-per-cent peroxide detection apparatus."

It only remains to add that the proposal to train the first flights of S.P. infantry at Tidworth is being bitterly opposed by the Friends of Salisbury Plain. *Our Ornithological Correspondent* writes that the regular appearance of officers and other ranks at heights up to two thousand feet may seriously affect the breeding habits of the Hobby.

A Short Guide to Politics

I—The Socialists

By ALEX ATKINSON

THE Labour Party was formed, more in hope than in anger, in 1900, and gave rise almost immediately to one J. Ramsay MacDonald, whose moustache was to be bread-and-butter to cartoonists for a decade, and who reached his highest peak of happiness on the morning when every duchess in London wanted to kiss him, for reasons best known to himself. The party seems to have been invented by amalgamating the I.L.P., a sinister-looking bunch of malcontents commonly supposed to carry bombs in their overcoat pockets, with the Fabian Society, a group of vegetarians with hairy clothes, who believed in John Stuart Mill, Bernard Shaw, and something called the inevitability of gradualness. The Fabians were apt to sit about writing tracts and pamphlets on such outlandish subjects as unemployment, which until then had been regarded as a cross between an act of God and sheer bone idleness. G. D. H. Cole was a particularly prolific member, because he also turned out whodunits, in collaboration with M.

The movement has never really found favour among people who stick out their little finger when drinking tea, and the chief reason for this is that one of its begetters was an Ayrshire man called Keir Hardie, who never went to school in his life and was uncouth enough to go and work in a pit, of all places, at the age of ten. As one of the first Labour M.P.s he greatly amused the smart set by wearing a cloth cap in Westminster and getting himself worked up about people who didn't appear to have much background, let alone shoes or stockings. As a matter of fact, right down to the present day the Labour party has kept on throwing the most frightfully bizarre or undesirable-looking characters in the face of the public, dammit. MacDonald himself came from a tumbledown shack in some unfashionable place called

Lossiemouth, and never uttered a sentence that contained less than a thousand words, most of which were rhetorical, not to say downright interchangeable. To balance this there was Clement Attlee, a public school man who was about as garrulous as Gary Cooper, only not so tall. In between there came such obviously impossible people as Mrs. Braddock, who knew swear-words and interviewed callers while ironing shirts in the sitting-room, and Aneurin Bevan, who was caddish enough to remember unpleasant things about coal-mines, and suggested publicly that there were a number of underprivileged people in Britain, although he took care not to name any of them specifically.

The party was unpopular on all sides at the outset. The idea that a lot of uninformed clods should come shambling into the House of Commons, misplacing their aspirates and openly talking about

slums (which everybody knew were hardly a fit subject for conversation at the best of times) was most distasteful to the great majority of English people. By a tradition that went back as far as Aristotle it had been generally accepted that politics should be quietly managed by gentlemen who bought their shirts by the dozen, knew a good claret when they smelt one, and always had a choice of three house-parties for Goodwood. Even the working-classes (who were at that time well on the way to becoming a distinct species, even having their own separate diseases) threw up their hands in horror when these newfangled Labour people tried to persuade them that they were down-trodden wage-slaves being exploited by cynical capitalists on the one hand and degenerate landed gentry on the other.

For many years, therefore, the Labour Party had to devote a good deal of time and energy to getting the proletariat accustomed to the ideas of Robert Owen, Rousseau and Saint-Simon, not to mention Marx and Engels. It was an uphill task. Many an unemployed labourer in 1912, living with his wife and six children in one rat-haunted room, would no more dream of casting a vote for Labour than he would omit to touch his hat and simper whenever he saw his landlord. Right up to the nineteen-twenties it took a bold man to admit that he had thrown in his lot with



"Why aren't you messing about?"

the raggle-taggle Socialists, who seldom shaved, and were always complaining, and made the public bar smell so, and probably wanted to blow up Buckingham Palace, and went on hunger marches in such awful clothes, and had thoughts above their station, and fell down drunk in the streets, and so far demeaned themselves as to ask for bread, and actually maintained that a lad who learned his sums at a village school and then became a cowman had as much right to piped water and a holiday with pay as the son of a lord who would never do a hand's turn even when he had inherited ten acres of desirable London property at the age of twenty-one.

Gradually, however, and chiefly through the support of the trade union and co-operative movements, the down-trodden masses were made to admit that the dice *might* be loaded just a fraction in favour of the bloated capitalists (who were, as a matter of strict historical accuracy, usually inclined to be on the gaunt side, and troubled with dyspepsia). At last, in 1924, Labour had the audacity to win an election and almost before anyone knew what was happening they put through a Housing Act, a Minimum Agricultural Wages Act, and a measure to increase the range of old-age pensions. This might seem revolutionary enough, but it didn't satisfy the I.L.P. members. They pig-headedly continued to demand "Socialism in our time" and set up a left wing opposition within the party. The precise meaning of "Socialism in our time" has never been satisfactorily

established. Thus, to some it might mean Nationalization of Everything Overnight by one concise little Bill, while to others it might mean the rattle of the tumbril in Pall Mall, the setting up of barricades, the driving of the Tories underground, the burning of Lord's, the looting of the Athenæum, and the crowning of Mr. Cousins on the steps of Transport House. Whatever its significance, the split has never quite healed, and to-day the party is at great pains to deny that it exists, the denials growing the more vociferous the more dangerously it yawns.

During the nineteen-thirties a lot of people called intellectuals came crowding into the party. On account of their greasy sweaters and burning, deep-set eyes some of them were suspected of being Communist infiltrators, although they swore they were simply Tolstoyan liberals from the London School of Economics. Be that as it may, a good number of them seem to have died in Spain. Ever since then the membership of the party has been changing, until to-day it would be quite wrong to assume that the shabby out-of-work at the dogs is the only one who clings to

Socialism as the answer to man's dreams. He has been joined by the free-thinking young scientist in the Chelsea maisonette, coming down to breakfast in his sandals and finishing the *Listener* crossword in twenty minutes flat by the cuckoo clock his mistress brought back from Austria.

Labour people to-day tend to prefer Louis Armstrong to Miles Davis, and the Third Programme to either. They use long words, know a lot about politics, complain that the *New Statesman* is not as good as it was, fasten their neckties loosely, prefer old cars and undubbed Continental films, have a lively contempt for Annigoni and Wilson Steer, wish they *really* liked the *Mirror*, and pretend they know just what Mr. Gaitskell means when he talks of "planned economy." If anything they are rather more set in their ways than the Conservatives. They have never really forgiven Edward VII for saying "We are all Socialists nowadays," and to-day, as they sit in opposition and see so many of their ideas being put into practice almost as a matter of course, they are apt to wonder just who *won* the revolution.

Landladies in My Life

By PATRICK RYAN

ON balance I suppose I've been more trouble to landladies than they've been to me. Although I was undoubtedly the innocent party when the baker pitched me into the gutter of the Old Kent Road. His wife was an attentive landlady and a beautiful cook, but she had this nympho streak. She took more than a fancy to me at seventeen and was chasing me round and round the dough-bin one evening when her husband came in and caught her hot-handed. Unfortunately he got the impression, which she immediately encouraged, that I was chasing her, and he tossed me into the street forthwith.

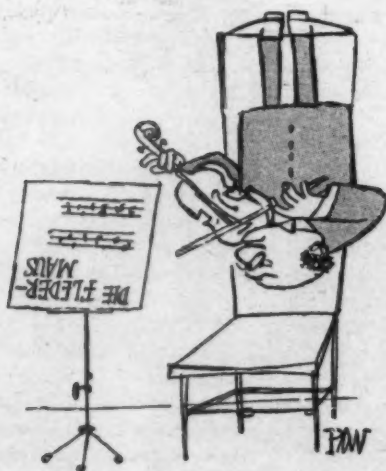
I next found shelter with Mrs. Tablet who kept me physically comfortable, but spiritually uneasy. She made a profession, a religion and a way of life out of superstition, eternally watching for omens of ill-luck and patiently seeking out their fulfilment. Spilt salt,

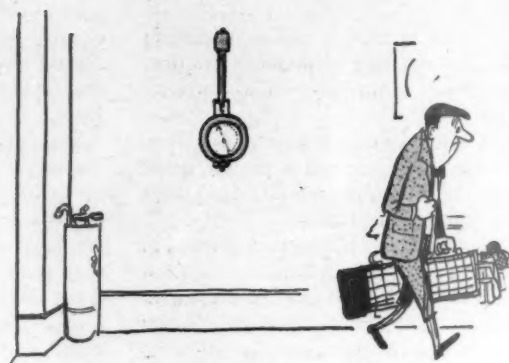
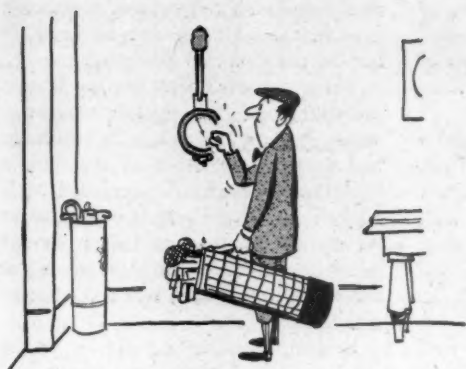
thirteen, cross-eyes, ladders, Macbeth-tea-leaves and such bric-à-brac haunted her life, and once she had spotted a portent of doom she couldn't rest easy until she had tracked down its fruition. Sometimes, I was certain, she engineered events to fulfil a foreboding.

The floor creaked under the lino in the front passage as I came in one night. Mrs. Tablet recited happily.

"When the floor creaks, within the week there'll be a broken bone."

Nobody broke any limbs in the house during the next three days, so she went into action herself. She polished the lino till it was slippery as ice and the door-mat slid like a puck. Then she reported a gas-leak and got the fitter as he stepped briskly through the front door. He was a big man and he came down like an avalanche and fractured something in his wrist. Whether it was the superstition satisfied, or his weight





bashing the joists into place, I don't know, but the creaking stopped.

Her favourite superstition concerned two plaster bas-relief portraits she had of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. They were set in oval frames about two feet long, hung side by side on the kitchen wall, and were harbingers of death. Whenever the Reaper was coming to the house one of those pictures fell down, and the sex of the monarch indicated the sex of the next one to go. Mrs. Tablet's grandmother was run over by a mineral-dray three days after Queen Alexandra hit the floor. King Edward came down one Easter Saturday and on the Bank Holiday they carried old Mr. Tablet in through the front door on a builder's ladder, stark and stiff and the beer-froth still wet on his moustache. The Queen fell one Tuesday morning and Mrs. Tablet's mother laughed about it; but she didn't laugh no more after the Friday because, by then, she was laid out in the bedroom and looking like an angel from heaven in the best elm-and-brass-handles money could buy. Mrs. Tablet's husband, God rest his soul, but for the drink as fine a man as ever breathed and don't let me hear none as says different, went out like a light in that very chair you're sitting in four days after King Edward bumped the lino. She lost her first and her third, and both their passings were prophesied by the plaster pictures. Nobody died in that house but Edward and Alexandra gave them time to repent and make peace. So you will understand that I felt the creeping frost-bite when Mrs. Tablet brought me a cup of tea one morning and asked sadly "How do you feel?"

"All right," I said. "Why?"

"King Edward. 'E come down in the night. Like a bomb it was when 'e 'it the floor. I come up and looked at you straight away, but you was still breaving."

"Why shouldn't I be breathing?"

"You're the only man in the 'ouse, ain't you? And King Edward's come down."

And she left me to my doom.

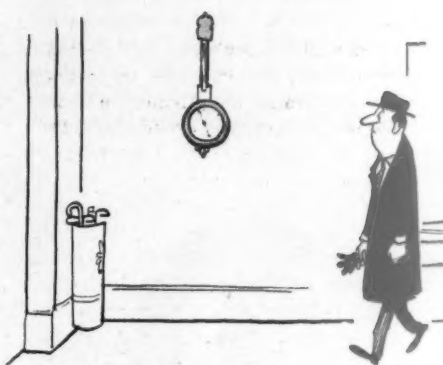
All that week she kept looking at me for signs of death.

"'Ow you feeling, son?" she'd ask me ten times a day.

"You ain't eating much, are you? I suppose you're losing your appetite now, eh?"

I wasn't losing my appetite. I was afraid to eat except when hunger forced me. I reckoned that if I didn't kick the bucket by the end of the week she'd be after poisoning me to make King "Teddy's" warning come true. What I wanted was a food-taster, but I couldn't afford one on my salary as an apprentice park-keeper. When she didn't do my washing the next Monday—what was the point? I'd never need another change—I packed my bag and crept out in the middle of the night. So that she and King Edward wouldn't pursue me to the death I left a note saying I'd been crossed in love and was going to jump in the river.

I went to stay later on with a Miss Pool and she frightened me, too, in the end. Religious and happy in melancholy, she used to leave a fresh text by my porridge each morning. Her greatest pleasure was to hear of the misfortunes of others. Somebody fell off a bus, or got pneumonia, or caught in a revolving door, and Miss Pool hailed it as a



triumph for divine justice, retribution to another deserving sinner.

"You only get served evil if you've lived evil," she'd say happily.

The only person she had a good word for was a bedridden Salvationist opposite who used to wear the top half of her uniform in bed and sing hymns all day. One winter's afternoon she was singing away devoutly when her roof caved in and snow and ceiling crashed all over her bed. I wondered how Miss Pool

would fit the event into her tit-for-tat theory.

"Awful thing," I said. "A saintly old lady suffering an accident like that. Whatever could she have done to deserve it?"

"I don't know. Not yet. But there was something she had to pay for, never fear." She smiled deeply. "God don't pay his debts in money."

God don't pay his debts in money . . . I didn't know exactly what it meant but the words sent a cold wind from the river whistling straight up my shirt. To this day the sentence lurks in my subconscious and, at recollection, sends draughts blowing round my soul. When I finally knock at the tradesmen's side-entrance to the Golden Gates St. Peter will look out and say "Oh! it's you, is it. Now you're going to find out, my lad. God don't pay his debts in money."

But the landlady to whom I owe my greatest debt is Mrs. Murphy—or, more directly perhaps, to Mr. Murphy, Nature's master of the art of writing, the Quiller-Couch of the Old Kent Road.

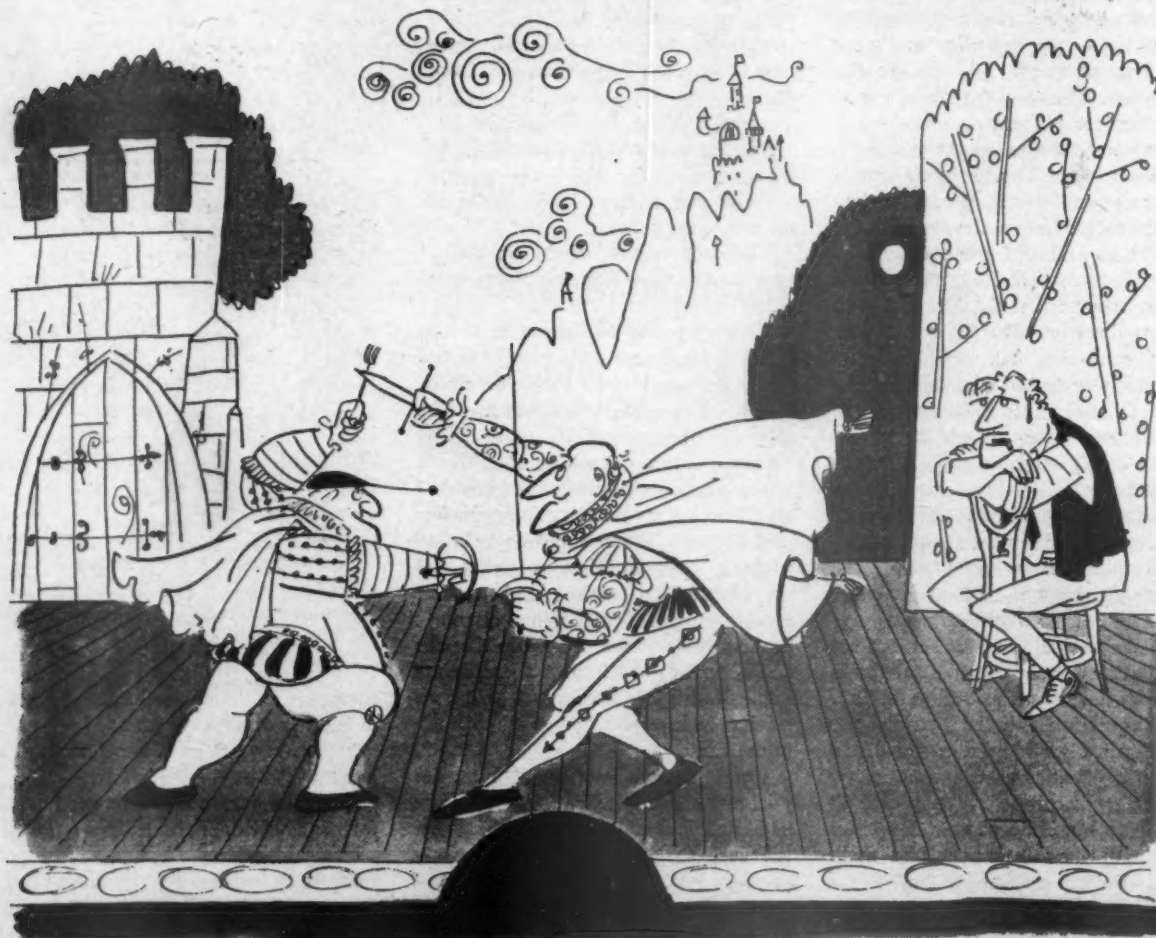
Everything was perfect at Mrs. Murphy's—the bed, the fire, the food, the price—and I could have lived out my life at her house. A fat, cheerful soul, her face and spirit a tribute to stout, she talked from morning to night. She doted like a mother on a pet canary she kept in the front room. Gloria it was called, and it lived in a cage hung with enough tassels and trinkets to sicken a sultan.

Mr. Murphy worked down the sewers and had two pairs of those enormous boots. He loved those boots the way his wife loved her canary and spent most of his spare time polishing them.

He was a man of very few words and rarely spoke all day, except to ask for condiments. He sat and he smoked, and he polished and he thought.

The only time in my life any female picked me up in the street, it turned out to be a cat. It looked thin and pathetic and gave me so much of the dumb-friend malarkey that I persuaded Mrs. Murphy to let me keep it in the house on my solemn promise that it should never be allowed in the front room and should be locked away whenever Gloria was loose.

Bridget, I called it, after a young woman who had lately clawed my heart, and as long as I fed her regularly and treated her as a superior being we got on happily together. She was always on the look-out for a dab at Gloria, and I had to be pretty sharp sometimes to keep her out of the canary's room.



"Very funny, I'm sure, Mr. Prentiss."

I grew fat with food and content at Mrs. Murphy's, and it was a nasty shock when I came home one wet evening to find my suitcase packed and standing on the doorstep, the sound of female sobbing coming from the window and Mr. Murphy waiting in the doorway. He handed me my mackintosh and a brown-paper parcel of my books.

"What's up, Mr. Murphy?" I asked. "Why all this?"

He took his pipe out of his mouth and pointed it at my chest.

"Out," he said. "Your cat ate 'er bird."

And he closed the door.

I stood there in wonder, stunned, not by the shock of eviction but by the marvellous economy of his words, the perfection of his narrative, the stark, crystal precision of his style. Every detail of the melancholy tragedy . . . three characters, two animals, death, violence and retribution, were clear and condensed in those six little words.

I repeated them in admiration, standing there in the rain, in the evening, in the Old Kent Road.

"Out. Your cat ate 'er bird."

Dickens had handled it and we'd have been into the third chapter before the birdcage dealer got off the stage-coach; Proust, and four volumes would be gone before the idea of a canary became concrete in Mrs. Murphy's mind; ten pages of Joyce and we'd all still have been praying in the public bar—but for Mr. Murphy six words sufficed, six words of one syllable, nineteen letters, leaving out the aitch. And even Hemingway kept in the aitches.

I picked up my case and went out to find a new home. Tossed out again, but this time the lesson was worth it. I had beheld perfection and was satisfied. I savoured the line aloud again.

"Out. Your cat ate 'er bird."

A passing policeman looked at me hopefully as I trudged through the rain. One day, I said to myself—one day, Mr. Murphy . . .

☆

"Lady Sarah Craven, 18, . . . spent part of the past summer working in a holiday camp—cutting sandwiches. Next month she hopes to start training a as manicurist."

Sunday Express

Thanks for the warning.

Man in Apron

by *Larry*



Great News for Naturists

VICTORY at last! An all-embracing blow
Shivers Officialdom's outmoded clamps;
Cinemas everywhere are free to show
Non-stimulating films of nudist camps.

The Censor's ruling has been rightly scorned
By local bodies; persons fully grown
May revel now in Rounders unadorned
Provided no corruptive shots are shown.

Skippers and jumpers too, the nimbly scootered,
Ninepinners gay and flyers of a kite—
All may be glimpsed entirely unaccounted;
Nothing is sacred save the impolite.

The camera that previously depicted
Set portions only of the human hull
Now, it appears, may saunter unrestricted
So long as the results are pretty dull.

— DANIEL PETTIWARD

Perhaps the reason women are said to drive more slowly than men is that they usually do anything to keep under thirty.

—"600 Mag"—3738

"It was at the cricket match you proposed to me. That day you were really bold".

"No darling", replied the husband, "caught".

3622

BATHING SUIT:
A garment without
hooks, but with plenty
of eyes on it.

3621

He who believes that where there's smoke there's fire hasn't tried cooking on a camping trip.

3768

In the window of an antique shop:—
YOU THINK IT'S JUNK?
COME IN AND ASK THE
PRICE.

3767

Professional joke-finders feel an instinctive sympathy for others in the same line of business, and are naturally curious about their methods. How does the joke get on the match-box? A *Punch* inquiry reveals all.

THE British public may not read books, but it reads boxes, bottles and bags with praiseworthy application. "*Cette sauce de haute qualité . . .*" is a favourite of the cultivated. Others revel in the rubrics which, say, "Contains only tragacanth, vegetable stabilizer, potassium iodide and emulsifying fats . . ."

Many manufacturers offer what may be described as recreational reading. Notoriously, the cereal packet rivals

match manufacturers. It would have been little use applying for it. The selection of jokes is the privilege of the managing director, who has a retentive memory and scorns to use the sort of cross-indexed gag file that radio comedians have been known to employ.

One would like to report that, just as the directors of scent-manufacturing firms gather round the table to approve names like *Cocotte*, *Furioso* and *Lust*, so the board of the match company

MATCH BOX TRICK

By E. S. TURNER

the newspaper as a source of vicarious excitement at breakfast. But the most popular of commercial readings is still the joke on the England's Glory match-box.

These jokes first began to appear about fifty years ago, in that innocent day when bicycle chains were used to propel bicycles, and many of them still retain a pleasing innocence. At present the circulation of each joke is anything from a quarter to half a million boxes, and no doubt the market research people will have figures to show how many people see the joke, or rather, read the joke, on any one box. The figures must be impressive. Who has not seen a match-box passed from one end of the saloon bar to the other, raising smiles, frowns, guffaws and glazed incomprehension on its passage?

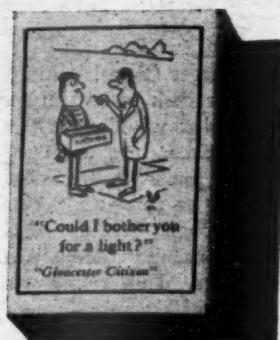
In a recent novel a character was credited with the intention of trying for the post of joke editor with a firm of

meets in full session to consider jokes like "He: I've got half a mind—" She: I know, dear," or to decide which favourites of a former day may safely be revived. But this does not happen; and the board, one suspects, is happy to be relieved of the responsibility of debating fifty new jokes every ten days.

The jokes, it will be noticed, are numbered and even coded, though it was not always so. Earnest students have often puzzled over the nature of the code, but it is all really quite simple. Thus, Joke No. 233/1 (MacDonald: And how's the world been treating you lately? MacDougall: Verra seldom, Mac, verra seldom) was originally No. 233 when numbering was introduced, but is having its first re-run, possibly by special request. A joke with the number two or three after the oblique stroke is obviously a very successful joke indeed and should be suitably revered.

Again, a joke may carry an attribution like C. V. R., 2141. The initials C. V. R. are of course those of the contributor, and a fortunate fellow he is. It used to take many years for a contributor to get his initials into *Punch*, and it may take a man just as long to get them on the back of a match-box, if indeed he ever does. Occasionally a contributor may have his name and home town printed, like the much-envied J. T. Porter, of Coventry. There are no firm rules in this matter, nor is there any reason why there should be.

The prestige afforded by having one's name or initials on a match-box needs little stressing. What greater satisfaction than to be able to light a friend's



cigarette and then, with a casual flourish of the box, to say "By the way, what do you think of my little joke?"

Before that day arrives there is the thrill of going into the local store day after day, buying box after box, to see if one's joke has appeared; then the greater thrill of buying several dozen boxes to buttress one's ego for the next twelve months.

Many of the match-box jokes are credited to house magazines, which are always a faithful source of witticisms (the editors often suspect that their readers look at the jokes and nothing else). A long series of motoring quips, of the "I misjudged a lady crossing the street" variety was recently acknowledged, rather surprisingly, to the *Manchester Guardian*, which by now must have a nation-wide reputation as a source of rib-ticklers. This series even attracted the interest of phillumenists, or match-box label collectors. The idea

About her make-up
she was very cos-
meticulous.

—"600 Mag"—3734

of trying to collect all the jokes that were ever printed is too much to contemplate, but a limited series is not without its appeal to the specialist.

It has happened sometimes that a man going to buy a box of matches with a joke on it has been given one bearing a patriotic slogan, a safety hint, a call by Lord Nuffield, a line by Milton or even an aircraft silhouette. Conceivably, he may have found the back of the box devoted to an appreciation of fifty years' conscientious service performed by a member of the firm (one cannot recall that the makers of, say, safety-razor blades ever honoured their veterans in this way). There is, of course, no guarantee that one will find a joke on the box, but jokes have always been available to the determined seeker.

Curiously, Welsh match-addicts receive privileged treatment. Here, for instance, is W/40, which was well spoken of in the Cymric fastnesses:

Pan welodd llymeitwr hi'n bwro,
Ac yntau ynghanol y twrw,

"Trueni," eb ef,

A'i wep tua'r nef,

"Na fyddai'r glaw yma yn gwro."

One gathers that it is about a tippler who wishes the rain consisted of ale. English translations are sometimes provided. Not everyone can turn an English limerick into a Welsh one, or vice versa, hence it is no surprise to learn that the company has the advice of a well-known professor who is an authority not only on the Welsh language but on Welsh manners.

There appears to have been no demand for jokes in Gaelic. At first sight this is odd, for the Scots Nationalists do not lie down easily under a slight. Possibly they are a shade touchy over jokes about MacDonald and MacDougall. Or perhaps, unlike the Welsh, they do not care to be too closely associated with *England's Glory*—who knows?

Salesgirl: "Here's a greeting
card with a wonderful senti-
ment: 'To the only girl I ever
loved'."

Sailor: "That's the one for
me. I'll take a dozen."

—"Laughter Ahey"—3731

"When the old car's suspen-
sion had been greased, one
experienced the odd sensation
of riding on a rattling blanc-
mange."

—"600 Mag"—3736

The Dictionary is the
only place where success
comes before work.

—"Reader's Digest"—3733

"What's up with the Old
Man today; his under the
weather isn't he?"

"Under the weather! Why
he's a total wreck."

—"Laughter Ahey"—3732

The human brain is a
wonderful thing. It starts
working the moment you are
born and never stops until you
stand up to speak at a public
gathering.

—"600 Mag"—3735



1



2

Life at Porridge's

A Question of Values

By MARJORIE RIDDELL

DURING my second week as Press Relations Officer at Porridge's of Mayfair a fashion article appeared in the *Daily Bugle* describing some of the children's party dresses available at various London stores. All the well-known stores were mentioned except Porridge's.

This represented a loss in publicity, and Porridge's were furious. I was called into Carper's office and asked for an explanation.

It's quite an interesting story (I told Carper) and it began with what may appear irrelevance at about three-thirty on Tuesday afternoon when I was caught nipping smartly, and illegally, into the Senior Women's Washroom on the third floor.

I was caught by Miss Bleat, though in fact she was too far away to stop me going in and I wasn't really caught until I came out. As the Senior Women's Washroom is for Buyers only, and Miss Bleat is not a Buyer, naturally she had to wait for me outside.

"I have been the Assistant Buyer in Feathers and Artificial Flowers for twelve years," she said, quivering, "but I have never once been inside that washroom!"

So half an hour later I was sitting on a hard little chair outside a grim-looking door labelled "Staff Manager (Female)."

I had to wait for twenty minutes, but no time was wasted on preamble once I got inside.

"Have you the least idea, Miss Turner," the Staff Manager (Female) said, "of the seriousness of what you have done?"

"Well—" I said.

"You have not only broken a rule, you have abused a privilege. The privilege of admission to the Senior Women's Washroom is awarded only with promotion to Buyer status, and Miss Bleat is naturally most upset."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I do realize I was in the wrong, and—"

"It is no good making excuses. You are one of the senior members of the Advertising Department and it is part of your responsibility to set a good example to your juniors."

"I was on the second floor," I said, "and I had only two minutes before an appointment on the first floor. As the Junior Women's Washroom is up on the fourth floor I thought I would save time by—"

"Please don't evade the issue," the Staff Manager (Female) said. "What do you imagine might have been the result if you had been seen by someone other than Miss Bleat? Perhaps by one of the typists or clerks from your own Department? What do you think would have happened then?"

"Well—" I said.

"She would have said to herself 'Good gracious me, there is Miss Turner coming out of the Senior Women's Washroom. Well, I never! If she can go in there, then so can I.'"

The Staff Manager (Female) leaned forward over her desk and went on, intently, "And what would have followed? A complete breakdown of discipline; every junior in the store would be insisting on using the Senior Women's Washroom. And, Miss Turner, the responsibility would have been entirely yours. How would you have felt about that?"

"Well—" I said.

"Of course the trouble might lie with the fact that you have not previously worked in a store. But in an organization of this kind there has to be discipline. A soldier," said the Staff Manager (Female), "cannot survive without discipline."

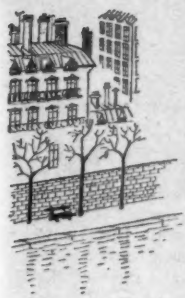
"Speaking of work," I said, "I have rather a lot waiting for—"

"On the other hand," she went on, "perhaps this was not an act purely of irresponsibility. Perhaps you feel that in your position you should have equal rights with the Buyers regarding washrooms. Is that what has been worrying you?"

"No," I said.

"Because if it has I can assure you there is no possibility whatever of there being a change in procedure. You will continue to use the Junior Women's Washroom—that is your position and you must learn somehow to accept it. You must realize that your work is more important than any such matter as this."

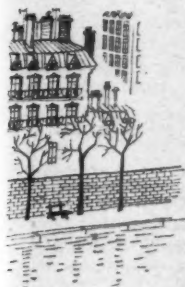
"Just now," I said, "I have a great deal of work that—"



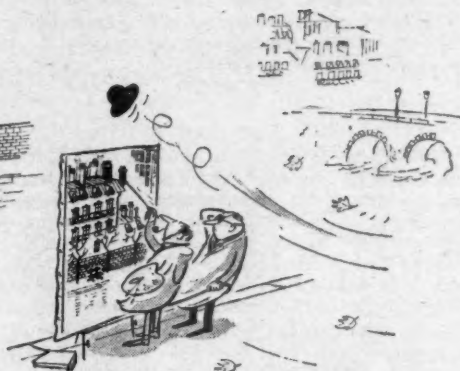
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"It may interest you to know," the Staff Manager (Female) said, "that it is still a matter of dispute as to whether or not even the Fashion Adviser should be admitted to the Senior Women's Washroom. Though here, of course, the rather difficult matter of precedent has arisen as the position is newly created. But I would like to point out to you that since the matter was first placed under discussion six months ago the conduct of the Fashion Adviser has been entirely exemplary. She has made no attempt whatever to anticipate our final decision. And the situation is even more difficult than perhaps you imagine, because while she cannot use the Senior Women's Washroom she is at the same time manifestly too senior to be permitted to use the Junior Women's Washroom. Therefore—"

She broke off. She leaned back in her chair and tapped thoughtfully on her desk.

"We were obliged," she went on, "to come to an arrangement with the

proprietors of the Kosy Kafe along the road."

She paused. "We have had nothing but complete understanding and co-operation from the Fashion Adviser; she appreciates fully that the matter is being treated with the greatest possible urgency. It will, in fact, be first on the agenda at the next meeting of the Board of Directors in two months' time. Now, Miss Turner—do you think you can say, in all honesty, that in similar circumstances your own behaviour would compare favourably with that of the Fashion Adviser?"

"No," I said.

It went on and on and on, and when eventually I got back to my office there was a message from the *Daily Bugle* fashion editor telling me about the feature and asking if she could come into the store that afternoon to see our children's party dresses and make sketches. But by now it was five-thirty. And the store closes at five-thirty. So I rang the *Daily Bugle* and apologized.

"And that," I said to Carper, "is how it happened. We missed a darn good editorial because I was kept fooling around for more than an hour in the Personnel Department."

"It's disgraceful," Carper said immediately. "I will not have the work of the Department disrupted like this. It's exactly the kind of thing that seems to be happening all over the country to-day—people have no sense of proportion or values. It's no wonder we pass from one economic crisis to another. I will not tolerate such an attitude at Porridge's. There is the right time for everything, and the right place for everything, and whether you like it or not your place is in the Junior Women's Washroom on the fourth floor."

He paused, breathing hard. "I have been the Assistant to the Director of Advertising for fourteen years," he said, "and I have never once been inside the Senior Men's Washroom."

The End

CHESTNUT GROVE

Charles Keene's first appearance in *Punch* was in 1851; he contributed regularly from 1862-1890



SHOPPING!

Lady (at Sea-side "Emporium"). "HOW MUCH ARE THOSE—AH IMPROVERS?"

Shopman. "IMPROV—HEM!—THEY'RE NOT, MA'AM (confused)—"NOT—NOT THE ARTICLE YOU REQUIRE, MA'AM. THEY'RE FENCING-MASKS, MA'AM!" [Tableau!]

December 23, 1886

Pillory

Readers offer their grievances in response to A.P.H.'s appeal

I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK

"Cafeteria Open All the Year Round," said the notice on the side of the pier. We paid our fourpence, passed through the turnstiles, found the cafeteria not only shut but being painted, a rope across the door and a notice hung on the rope saying "Keep Out." This is a hangover from the days of the blackout, when shops exhibited notices saying "Open" long after they were closed, the point being that a shop thought to be shut when it wasn't could mean business lost; tempers lost by would-be consumers, thinking the shop to be open when it wasn't, have no effect on the cash register, so why worry? A related offence is the brilliant and enticing window-lighting of shops after closing-time, particularly chemists. I walked half a mile in the West End of London last week, looking for something to guard against coughing in the theatre. At last—"The Continental Pharmacy," ablaze with light. Traffic was thick, and it took me five minutes to cross the road and read the small "Closed" on the door.

WALTER BEST, ST. MARGARET'S, TWICKENHAM

UP AND DOWN

My disposition would be much sweeter although my waist-line might be less sylph-like if the B.B.C. would relay all its programmes at the same volume. There is some reason for contrasting *piano* and *forte* in the symphonies of Brahms or Beethoven, or for the occasional dramatic effect of a river in flood or body falling over a cliff, but there is no need for the insistently repeated news summaries, read over in a confidential undertone, to be followed by a crashing crescendo of introductory music in the evening play. I heave myself out of a comfortable armchair, turn the noise down and resume my knitting. As the announcer begins to speak I have to lay my work aside again and rush to the radio so as not to miss the scene-setting. As soon as that is over the voices rise again and I wish I'd gone to the pictures instead.

JOSEPHINE DORAN, LEAMINGTON SPA

NATIONAL HERITAGE

Is it too much to hope that A.P.H. might revive the Word War, which he fought to gallantly years ago? Since then our common speech has hardly improved. Right now, things are different to what they were. Between you and I, we may anticipate that someone will issue a directive about it soon. Then things may be better for you and I. Dig that. Bye-bye.

M. O. CARTER, BRISTOL

Under the Act

THE punishment must to the crime be suited,
Say those with public safety in their care,
And misdemeanants will be prosecuted
For trespass on the public thoroughfare.

Appropriate penalties the law dispenses
For misbehaviours on the road or street,
But on the nature of the said offences
The popular confusion is complete.

To lump them both together is misleading—
Each governed by a different Act, or Bill;
The one offender will be charged with speeding,
The other will be pinched for standing still.

The malefactor of the female gender
Alone for street offences may be fined,
While no sex-bar affects the road offender,
Who legally may be of either kind.

Both categories are entirely separate,
Although the law is always on their heels—
The one is a pedestrian inveterate,
The other always runs around on wheels.

Each on a different count is apprehended,
Charged with offences on the street or road,
But under different clauses they offended—
One breaks the moral, one the Highway Code.

— OLGA KATZIN

Essence of



Parliament

IT is only once in a blue moon that questions finish before the end of question-time, and it was indeed a unique oddity that for the first time in history the blue moon should have fallen on Budget Day. Every other day of the year, the sooner the Minister gets through his opening speech the better pleased everybody is, but of course in the Budget the Chancellor has to keep back his tax changes until he is quite certain that all the stockbrokers have gone out to tea. So the result of his having to start a quarter of an hour too soon was that he had to add super-pad to pad and play round and round like a gramophone needle that has got caught up in the same groove. He did it quite well. The Chancellor would make a good cat if he did not happen to be a Chancellor, and the Socialists, to do them justice, both saw the joke and enjoyed it. It looked at the time as if the Chancellor was enjoying it, but apparently it was more of a strain than we had guessed. For a few minutes before the end he discovered that his glass of milk and rum was empty and went deathly pale. Ministerial colleagues, vying against one another to emulate Sir Philip Sydney, called urgently for a glass of water, and when the water arrived the Chancellor again and again put it up to his lips and then put it down untasted. "Drink it," shouted encouraging Socialists. In the end he drank and apparently it did the trick.

There is a standing order of the House that all Members on either side must invariably say what a nice man the Chancellor is. Mr. Gaitskell was in no mood to defy that order. "Massive" he called the Budget. Mr. Wilson had called the Chancellor's last Budget "a mouse of a Budget." By an inversion of the usual process the mouse had given birth to the mountain.

"The Emperor of China baptized a whole army with a hose-pipe." In much the same sudden way, thought Mr. Harold Wilson, the whole Conservative party has become suddenly converted to expansion. This was a good example of the Harold Wilson joke. A moment's thought, and it would be obvious that no Emperor of China would ever have baptized anybody with or without a hose-pipe. There is, I think, some story of a Chinese Christian general doing some mass-baptism, and there is a famous passage in Disraeli about Charlemagne baptizing the Saxons by battalions. It was all near enough for Mr. Wilson. Jokes can be stolen from Conservatives provided that they were made some time ago, and there is no reason to get them accurate, or indeed even plausible.

In the House of Commons no one stops to think before he laughs. These are Mr. Wilson's discoveries. He is a witty, lively speaker, and he is well aware of it. And, even if his jokes are not greatly à propos, does that much matter? There is no joke like an old joke, and are they not better than no jokes at all? Perhaps it does not very

much matter so long as you are not going to be followed by Mr. Maudling. But Mr. Maudling is a formidable debater with a powerful memory. He deals with points one by one, remembers contradictions between the arguments of the first five minutes and the assertions of the peroration. He is in this in almost solitary pre-eminence among present-day Parliamentary speakers, and Mr. Wilson's case did not look so strong by the time that Mr. Maudling had finished with him. I must confess that I found both their speeches quite

interesting, but Mr. Grimond, the impartial umpire, apparently did not think so. He yawned once when Mr. Wilson spoke and again when Mr. Maudling answered him. One yawn all. But it is easy to be bored with other people's speeches when one is nervously waiting one's own turn to speak. Mr. Grimond, when it got around to him,

was concerned that future borrowing should be out of genuine savings and not out of created credit. Mr. Enoch Powell had reached much the same conclusion by a slightly different road. Dr. Dalton, who in his old age has developed a passion against tobacco worthy of King James I himself, was willing to forgive all so

long as the tobacco duty was not lifted.

The interest of Thursday was the reappearance of Mr. Thorneycroft, ruddy with the health of Australian suns and Test Matches well watched. Sir David Eccles and Mr. Jay had been dull as only Wykehamists can be dull. Manners Makyth Man but do not make jokes. After them Mr. Thorneycroft might have dominated the debate. It would be an exaggeration to say that he did so, but if he did not it was merely because of his decency and his generosity. It was all a model of good taste and high charity, made the more impressive by his important reminder that the last railway strike had been settled by the promise that the increase of wages would be covered by economies and that that promise had in no way been kept. It will be a tragedy if the accidents of the system should keep such a man as Mr. Thorneycroft permanently on a back bench.

Mr. Jenkins is much less afraid of a spot of inflation than are many other people and would have expanded more bravely—a vigorous argument that was at any rate a change from that of other speakers.

— PERCY SOMERSET



Mr. Heathcoat Amory



Mr. Jo Grimond

In the City



The Chancellor's Cornucopia

NEVER has a Budget been anticipated in the City with such eager relish; and never has reality exceeded expectations with such magnificence. This is a positively exuberant Budget. The tax concessions amounting to £295,000,000 for this year, plus the additional outlay of £71,000,000 on the accelerated repayment of post-war credits, will create new potential purchasing power of £366,000,000.

By no means all of this will be spent; but of this injection of an extra £1,000,000 a day into the British economy, all will be available in one form or another to take up the slack in trade and industry. The income tax cut will spread its beneficial effect over both consumption and investment—investment not only because many austere individuals will save part of their tax remission but because income tax on undistributed company profits will be ploughed back into the business.

The purchase tax cuts will help all consumer goods industries. They will for example sustain the boom in the British car industry, which apart from what it will gain in the domestic market is also covering itself with glory at the International Automobile Show in New York.

Firms making capital goods will get their stimulus not only from the income tax cuts but from the reintroduction of the investment allowance at the rate of 20 per cent on new plant and machinery and 10 per cent on buildings.

The Chancellor said that this must not be regarded as a "spending spree" Budget, but it will undoubtedly lead to more spending. Whether it stops short of the spree depends on how much people will save. It is, therefore, reassuring that no change has been made in the terms on which Savings Certificates and Defence Bonds are issued. This should allow the National Savings Movement, with genial Lord Mackintosh at the head, to equal this year its epic achievement of 1958-59, when it collected in small savings a net figure of just over £270,000,000,

compared with a deficit of £15,500,000 in the previous financial year.

The investment implications of this Budget were not difficult to interpret and the Stock Exchange on the morning after showed very clearly that for all its previous optimism it had not over-discounted what lay in store.

Breweries led the advance on the invigorating and quite unexpected news of "2d. off the pint." Among the shares that were justifiably bought were those of Whitbread, Watney, Guinness, and Bass.

Not far behind were the shares of commercial vehicle manufacturers whose products have now been completely freed from purchase tax. Leylands and Associated Commercial Vehicles are likely to reap rich rewards from this concession and from the general fillip that has been given to industrial re-equipment.

Motor shares have also celebrated the reduction in purchase tax. B.M.C., Fords and Jaguars now have a new growth element added unto them. With a more assured domestic market they will find it possible to reduce costs further and achieve more success than ever before in the increasingly competitive markets overseas.

The investment implications of the Budget are not all rosy. If all this promised expansion is to be contained within a setting of stable prices the discipline of relatively high interest rates will have to be maintained. The Government, moreover, has to borrow more than £700,000,000 this year for its own needs and those of the nationalized industries. That is a very great deal of money and the prospect of raising it does not bode too well for the gilt-edged market.

— LOMBARD LANE

* * *

In the Country



Woad for Crackpots?

MY first woad seedlings of the year have sprouted nicely. Fifteen months ago there circulated a pleasant tale of a farmer who dashed into the library at the National Farmers' Union headquarters with a demand for information on how to grow woad. He had read an American statement that a covering of woad was the best possible protection against atomic radiation. And he thought that if he put a few acres down to *Isatis tinctoria* immediately he'd be doing himself no harm: there might even be a good demand!

My own woad-raising does not stem from that tale, for I've long grown, biennially, a few woad plants—on the three cracked flower-pot standard. The link with dim history and ancient Britons has some appeal and it's nice to tease know-alls with a plant they can't identify. Then there's also the pleasure of dealing pedagogically with the inevitable: "I thought woad was blue? these flowers are yellow!" (The blue dye is

obtained from the leaves and stems of woad. Disbelievers can try the effect of rubbing the fresh juice of leaves on the skin. But don't, if you're thorough, expect to remove the stain easily or quickly: it *can* be a question of waiting for fresh skin to grow.)

Woad isn't only an ancient historical curiosity. A few field crops were still being raised a mere 30-35 years ago in the Boston-Wisbech area, which was the last main stronghold of the woad-growers or wadmen. In Somerset (Glastonbury enshrines *glastum*, the Latin for woad, and the term Watchet-blue is still remembered) woad cultivation died out earlier. I have found no living relics of Somerset woad but have been told that plants grow wild in the adjoining county, near Tewkesbury.

When woad-growing was half-dead in England, it seems to have been kept alive (like many old songs) in America. *Isatis tinctoria* is a greedy plant which likes good soil—and then exhausts it. Milling of the leaves and manufacture of the dye was normally on the edge of the field, and the business of "couching" or spreading partly-processed woad to ferment produced a most unpleasant ammonia-like smell. Queen Elizabeth I once issued a ban against any woad-couching within an area where she was circulating on one of her bed-occupying progresses.

The later uses of woad? Dying cloth—as for the uniforms of the police and sailors. Even when indigo had become the main dye, some woad was useful as a fixative.

— J. D. U. WARD

Toby Competitions

Competition No. 64

IMAGINE that some article of modern civilization is housed in a glass case in some future museum. There will be a little card describing it. Provide the wording for this. (Limit: one hundred words.)

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, April 24, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 64, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 61 (What Was Carroll Up To?)

Finding the ulterior motive in *Alice* was not easy. Judging from the relatively few entries many steady competitors were daunted. The undaunted, however, produced some ingenious theories, especially:

JOHN L. MACKWOOD
SHIP INN

ITCHENOR

CHICHESTER HARBOUR
SUSSEX

in this book review:

Blattsby, in his new book *To Make a Cat Laugh* (the cat Dinah, pp. 460-471), Hoddle and Trout, 45/-, shows that the Rev. Dodgson with his love for children, and noting their lack of understanding of animals, had in fact not written the "Alice" books for children at all. Dodgson's mother was a woman. This has been proved (pp. 103-431). It has nothing whatever to do with the argument. But Dodgson's kittenish actress friend, his doglike devotion to donnish duties, his stutter (at times like a chipmunk) are enough to show that the books were devised primarily for animal readers which were naturally enough rare in those early days. Thus, in order that the parent might prove to the child that the animal had a soul as well as sensitivity to pain, Dodgson wrote his great beastly sociological studies for the adult reader.

The following qualify for book tokens:

There are two adult ulterior motives—sex and politics. Carroll's trouble was the latter, despite contrary rumours. He was offered a seat but refused to run as junior colleague to a gin distiller and wasn't asked again. His frustration spilt over into the *Alices*. Gladstone (anathema to Carroll) was, variously, the Dormouse (sloth), the Duchess (arrogance), the Carpenter (humble origins, hypocrisy). Lord Randolph Churchill was the White Knight (cf. physical appearance) and Dilke Humpty-Dumpty (who had a great fall). Alice herself was the British Public, curious, bewildered by cross-talk (electioneering speeches), determined. That some of these persons were not politically notable until a good ten years after the book's publication does not invalidate the theory but proves Carroll's acute foresight. —*Grawille Garley, 15 Doric Avenue South, Frodsham, Cheshire*

"Alice" was an Oxford undergraduate undergoing a form of psychological treatment with Carroll. In the "adventures" he was working out in fantasy real-life problems and conflicts. The success of the treatment is clear—at first falling sensations, confinement in a room, and swimming (desire to return to the womb) give rise to conflicts about escape (repressed memories of birth trauma). Frustration (inability to communicate rationally) leads to aggression (significant use of colour red, decapitations associated with a mother-figure), but is finally resolved with the restoration of personality (Alice becomes Queen with a golden crown). A second volume interpreting these symbols was unpublished but embodied, unacknowledged, by Freud in his own theories. "Jabberwocky" deserves special analysis on these lines.—*Graham Cranmer, "Billett," Longbridge Road, Barking, Essex*

Being a mathematician Carroll hated women for being incalculable and took revenge on Alice by subjecting her to frustrations and snubs. Almost everybody is rude to her, the nadir of contempt being reached when the grin of the Cheshire cat as it looks at her outlasts even its face. Carroll sneers at the vaunted maternal instinct by showing Alice nursing the Duchess's baby which she is unable to keep from turning into a pig; the ministering angel illusion is disposed of by

making Alice help the White Knight on to his horse so badly that he promptly falls off again.—*Miss Dismore, The Bourne, Connaught Road, Camberley, Surrey*

... and in so doing presents a subtle picture of the English social scene. The animals (proletarians) are handicapped by lack of self-confidence and being inarticulate cannot express grievances. The Opposition (owl) so wanting in political acumen, epitomizes their pitiful inefficacy. The prevalent *Je m'en fiche* attitude is the cause not the effect of much of their suffering and brings about the lamentable insanity of the hare and the nihilism of the cat. The radical wing (tortoise) is quite clearly chafing at the shell with anger at the follies of the older generation (snail), and this is being encouraged by the bourgeois intellectual fringe (Hatter). The fusing of these progressive elements is beautifully sustained by the play on the words "mad" and "march."

Although the Queen obviously represents the government of the day, an interesting hypothesis is that she is also the embodiment of the concept of the Woman God, the Universal Mother, overbearing and self-willed, and deriving from Mesopotamian and Egyptian... —*Geoffrey Parker, 1 Primrose Villas, Llwydcoed, Aberdare, Glam.*

Bentley's Gallery



NICOLAS BENTLEY

Aristotle Socrates Onassis

You'd never think Onassis
Had such masses and masses.
If I had all that lolly,
I'd look ever so jolly!

La Jeunesse

ON Sunday week my son said he had given up women because they were too expensive.

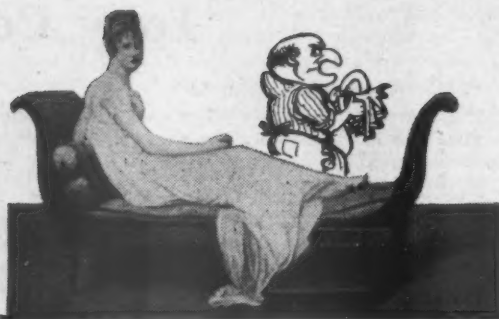
I thought it was a good idea too, but for different reasons. When my son has a girl friend he invariably brings her home to meals without previous warning. I get tired, also, of sitting like a dowager while they dance to records, or else discreetly keeping out of the way by sitting in the kitchen or my bedroom.

Later my son went to see some friends. When he came home he said he had met a smashing girl—Italian, her name was Maria, she was here to learn English, she was dark and nearly eighteen—just his age too, and he was taking her to coffee on Saturday evening. He went to bed early on Friday.

On Saturday he was very happy because he heard he had passed his maths and his physics exams, and to celebrate he bought a pair of yellow socks.

Uncle came up from the country, bringing a large plump chicken, but at dinner my son said he wasn't hungry, and after a small snack went off to take Maria to coffee. He was still out at half past eleven, so I went to bed. Next morning Uncle said my son came in very late and talked until after one o'clock. Uncle was tired and cross over breakfast. My son was late and tired too. He said

FOR
WOMEN



he had shaved, which was why he was late, and he was bringing Maria to lunch, if that was all right.

She turned out to be pretty and plump, and hardly talked at all but sat looking at my son as though he was something out of this world. I often think he is. We had lunch; then my son talked to his girl friend, Uncle pondered over his crossword puzzle and my daughter and I did the washing up until the 'phone rang. My daughter came back and said it was David, he wanted to take her to a cinema and could he come back to tea and supper, as my son was taking Maria to a cinema too (not the same one of course), and she was staying for supper too. I said yes (wondering if the goulash would go round), and almost at once David arrived. They all discovered there was only one film they wanted to see, and came to a decent agreement to go off in

pairs, and to sit at opposite sides of the cinema.

I asked Uncle to give me a call when it was five o'clock, as there was a French film I wanted to see, and went upstairs to lie down for an hour, with the cats.

Uncle awakened me, saying it was exactly five o'clock. I got off my bed, tidied my hair, put on some more lipstick, came downstairs and gave the cats some milk and searched for my cinema glasses, which I found at last under a cushion. The clock said twenty past six.

I checked up with TIM. It was twenty past six. Uncle said he was very sorry, he must have forgotten to wind his watch, sitting up so late talking to my son last night. The film had started at five-thirty.

My son and Maria and my daughter and David all came back from the cinema together. I said it was rather late for tea, would they like cider and sandwiches instead, but they said they would prefer tea, which means cereal and milk, cakes, bread and butter, and jam. I left them to it and went out with Uncle to the local for a beer.

We had supper at half past nine. The young hardly ate anything, just as I had expected, and the goulash went round with no worry at all. My daughter's boy friend went home then, as he had to be up early next day to go to his crammer. My son took his girl friend home. Uncle drove back to the country and I went off to bed.

When my son returned home at last, he came into my room and woke me up.

He was dreamy-eyed and he said This Time it was Different. He talked about his girl friend for ages, until he noticed I was more than half asleep again and not really paying much attention, so he said good-night and went to his room, perchance to dream . . .

— DIANA CHILDE

Concluding Our Great Romantic Serial

The Story So Far

Instalment VI: The Happy Haven

Jolting to Southampton in a recklessly-hired taxi Jasmyne Phrayle, orphaned blonde who has grown cress but not radishes since her dour Uncle Jem embezzled her fortune and died, like hard-headed Mat, that night she fell over Colonel Stuart and his badgers, wonders whether she should tell Gordon McTavish, the man she loves for whom she took a job in a beauty salon until a laundry parcel brought them together, that she has actually married this elderly badger-watcher with his shy charm. But she need not have worried, for a poster at Southampton announces his arrest for bigamy and she is free to fling herself into

the arms of the bronzed rising young doctor and potholer and to learn with amazement that Mark had not got dry rot but had run off with her cousin Sally on the same Madeira cruise on which he, Gordon, has been travelling as ship's doctor. Gordon adds that both Mark and Sally had willed her their money in the event of the liner sinking, which as it turned out is what happened and why Gordon is home early in a tanker. Rich again in money and in the love of the man she has desired so long, Jasmyne laughingly tells him not to squash her hat, which is of swathed chiffon with the new top height and butterfly bows.

The End

My Clothes and I

I OPENED the door to the *Observer* myself, wearing my Plantagenet head-dress, my duffel with the chutney buttons, and my lacerated bare feet. (Must remember to ring up Canon Collins and ask him if he knows a good chiropodist). You could, I suppose, call me a typical English beauty—provided, that is, that you didn't know too much about my relatives. My best feature is the faraway, myopic expression I assume when brooding over some proposition of Professor Ayer's or merely trying to see the number of the next bus—men tell me this is irresistible, though in fact it is simply due to the fact that my left eye is not trying very hard. I dote on vodka and I am also nuts about Zen. I don't get my hats from Simone Mirman, or from anyone else.

I always say that the secret of true elegance is to know who you are and what kind of life you are going to lead. I have known who I was ever since I can remember, and also which sex I was, and this has been a tremendous help to me in choosing my clothes. Clothes (I always say) give away a great deal about one's personality, and so I bear in mind when I am out on a shopping spree that I am over-endowed intellectually. This means that I must either throw dust in the eyes of the male by concentrating on baby pastel colours, a fluffy hair-do (*à la* Monroe), skin-tight dresses and a bare midriff, or highlight my intelligence, using make-up to exaggerate my high domed forehead, spectacles which lend an owl-like expression to my face, and jackets cut to emphasize the thin stoop of my shoulders. I find it great fun to switch from one role to the other, sometimes in the course of a single evening. This brings me to consider my motive in paying attention to dress, and I suppose it is the same motive which governs all my other actions, which is (not to beat about the bush) "Unsettle the Male."

Do I dress to please my husband? That is an interesting question and I think my considered reply must be "No," as it is about six years ago since I saw him last. That is if you are speaking about Babyface Boreno.

No, I do not think my interest in the mediaeval drama affects my taste in dress, though it is quite true that my

wardrobe contains two wimples, half a dozen thumb rings, and three pairs of ankle-length sleeves. And although I am madly religious it was only coincidence that I spent Lent in a white sheet, since my duffel and polo-sweater were at the cleaners. Where do I buy my underclothes? Mostly Marshall and Snelgrove, though I do find their collection of hairshirts a trifle conservative and tend to look to Italy for these. Pucci's designs for the Capuchin Friars could hardly be bettered for chic or texture-interest.

Play-clothes? I'm glad you brought that up, since anyone who has tried, like me, to do her yogi dozen in a tight-skirted grey worsted flannel suit will know that it poses problems in maintaining one's serenity that the East dreams not of. My *guru* laughed so much that he nearly burst one of his venerable old blood-vessels, and he has never really achieved Detachment since. Nowadays I wear a saffron-coloured drip-dry non-iron dressing-gown that Givenchy got tired of, and I must say it aids meditation a treat. Yes, Jacques Cardiac designs most of my clothes.

He has a contempt for the flesh and a sharp realization that he is designing *sub specie æternitatis* which seems to me to be the *sine qua non* of *haute couture*. Also he does not believe in having any fittings, and anyone who has had their clothes made by, say, Dior will know what a saving that means in time. Yes, Ferragamo would make my shoes if I wore any.

— MONICA FURLONG

☆

Mrs. Jones

MONDAYS, Wednesdays, Fridays, do

We rise with groans,
Prepare the house—our persons too—
For Mrs. Jones.

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, she
Ignores our moans,
But makes us ship-shape—all on tea—
Stern Mrs. Jones.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, week-ends, see
What happy drones
Dawdle around at liberty.
(No Mrs. Jones)

— T. R. J.



"I'm exhausted too—the baker didn't leave a cut loaf."



BOOKING OFFICE

Sea Spray

In Deep. Frank Baines. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 21/-

Wild Oats. R. L. Wild. *Blackwood*, 18/-

WHEN Frank Baines was eighteen his relations seem to have decided that he was unclubbable in dull conventional society. They therefore signed him on as an apprentice in a Finnish four-masted barque sailing from London to Australia.

Mr. Baines is an original. His first book, *Look Towards the Sea*, got him interviewed by Miss Nancy Spain from the edge of Platform One at Victoria Station, where he happened to be navvying at the time. His second book, *In Deep*, is another success. Mr. Baines has discovered a vein of fact-with-fiction in acceptable proportions and he is mining it to excellent purpose. *In Deep* is the narrative of his own voyage to Australia, but he includes two incidents—a death and a mutiny—that he has drawn from other sailors' yarns.

To the young Baines everything on board is new and strange, and he savours every sensuous detail of the ship from the moment when first he climbs tentatively into the rigging to the last days in Australia when the crew are fighting with knives and knuckle-dusters against sailors from a rival ship.

The unfolding analysis of the characters of the crew, most of them Scandinavians, is beautifully described against the backcloth of the sea, which itself is the protagonist in a drama:

"The sea crawled along the edge of the rail in thousands of little ripples loud with hissing, simply spitting with poisons like roused snakes, as wicked as cobras. By this time the scupper-holes were syphoning the water on deck in jets and the scuppers were seething. Then I knew the ship was going over and would never come up."

But it is in his evocative vision that Frank Baines scores. A pastoral

bathing scene on deck during a tropical rainstorm—"a sort of bagnio like one of those scenes from *Alma Tadema*"—forms a lyrical prelude to tension in the ceremony of Crossing the Line.

After the ritual killing of a pig for fresh meat—"We might have been Odysseus' men at the slaughter of the kine of the sun"—the comic parade is slowly transfigured and becomes strangely peculiar and primitive, ending in the death of an innocent. Mr. Baines's eye views this with nervous ferocity.

Anything after this is bound to be anti-climax. The rush of words, which up to this point make a scintillating spray, is dammed, as if the observer's vision, so bright until now, had been glazed by this experience of death. But it is refreshing to come across a book with so much gusto and vitality in the telling of it, as though Mr. Baines' eighteen-year-old self were pushing the story forward with a longing for life and

experience. It is tremendous stuff—Roderick Random laced with James Bond.

Mr. R. L. Wild is another wanderer. He is the man met casually in a pub who is fine value for half an hour. His book is a string of unrelated anecdotes, but it has no pretensions to be anything else. But any man who has separated an admiral from his fleet on manoeuvres by ordering the wrong signal, or who has caused a monkey to disrupt a military parade by following the sergeant-major is good company.

At fifteen Mr. Wild was investigating New York's bars during Prohibition, after running away from a job as telegraph boy in the New Forest. At seventeen a Royal Navy signaller, later a busker in the West End streets, and later still a soldier on the North-West frontier, he has some good stories to tell and he recounts them well.

He too has the gift of enjoyment. In spite of the considerable time he seems to have spent under naval or military restraint of one sort or another he gives the impression that his life has been enormous fun.

— DAVID WAINWRIGHT

POETS' CORNER



6. W. H. AUDEN

NEW FICTION

The Bystander. Albert J. Guerard. *Faber*, 15/-

Let Us Find Heroes. Gregory Solon. *Constable*, 16/-

The Secret of Luca. Ignazio Silone. *Cape*, 16/-

The Bystander, a story of a Parisian schoolboy who falls in love with a famous actress, is told with the leisurely authority that tales of *cocottes* and hopeless love used traditionally to receive. Eighteen years later he is still cherishing her image as he dreams his life away vainly trying to write in a slummy Nice apartment house. Then he meets her again: she is the mistress of a rich industrialist who occupies his villa only three weeks in the year. He moves in with her and a tragedy of possession develops. The framework of the novel is firmly drawn; there are no intrusive

shadows from anything outside it. The Riviera settings, luxurious or seamy, are brilliantly done; so are the heat and the anxiety and the pains and languours of love. The lovers are isolated under the microscope. Every shade of variation in their sexuality is noted, every ebb and flow of the narrator's yearning for defeat is precisely rendered by Professor Guerard (of Harvard).

Mr. Solon has followed his novel about the Roman legions lost by Varus with a story of defection in the Russian Army of Occupation in East Germany after Stalin's death. The occasional sentimentality of the earlier novel has been dried out, though there are still passages of comment and reflection which read rather slowly. A Soviet Hero in command of a company begins to doubt. His impeccable record itself becomes a source of suspicion to the Political Branch, who are constantly afraid of a split between the Army and the Party. Eventually the hero plans a mass desertion.

The military events are exciting; the political intrigue is convincing. Mr. Solon, who belongs to a generation that has known action and can write narrative, does not seem so happy in creating character, partly because he is concerned with general themes and tends to make his people illustrations of them. He tries to compensate by bashing away at character-traits instead of letting his people grow; but he is developing fast into a very interesting novelist.

Like the French film of low-life, the political novel about peasants used to get praised as a matter of course; but the market is hardening. No longer, if you describe hates and superstitions in a rocky, dusty village, can you be sure that no awkward questions will be asked about your competence as a novelist. It is a pity that Silone has been caught by this overdue reaction. How professional *The Secret of Luca* is; yet his name calls up all kinds of distracting associations—Resistance to Fascism, Manifestos, The Duty of the Writer towards Conferences of Writers.

This story of the man released after forty years' imprisonment for a crime he never committed, the village that refused to break its silence to save him, and the young political leader who insisted on finding the truth, never uses its wider implications as an excuse for dodging difficulties. It is not a great novel but it is a straightforwardly interesting and honest one, sardonic, compassionate and carrying the reader firmly along.

— R. G. G. PRICE

Other New Books

Daughter of France. V. Sackville-West. *Michael Joseph, 25/-*

One day in December 1670, in a well-bred flurry, Mme. de Sévigné dashed off her famous letter to M. de Coulanges, at Lyons: "I am about to

tell you the most astonishing thing, the most surprising, the most miraculous, the most triumphant, the most bewildering, the most unheard-of, the most singular." La Grande Mademoiselle, the Daughter of France, first cousin of Louis XIV (and the greatest heiress in the country), was, at the age of forty-three, to marry M. de Lauzun, a minor *cadet de Gascoyne*. We shall never know, alas, if this marriage was actually performed. But Mademoiselle's romance, the subsequent disgrace and long imprisonment of Lauzun, his eventual release and appalling ingratitude to her: these only form the most astonishing episode in a most astonishing story. Mademoiselle herself, proud, passionate, tomboyish, vivid, holds our attentions from her birth to her funeral (when the urn containing her entrails "exploded with a frightful noise" and "the chaos was extreme"). She has found an appreciative biographer; Miss Sackville-West has recorded her with vigour, charm and distinction. This is indeed a three-star book.

— J. R.

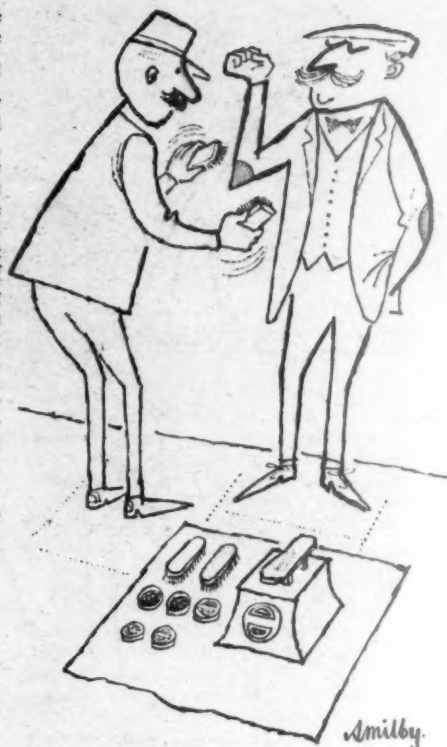
Britain and the Arabs. Glubb Pasha. *Hodder and Stoughton, 30/-*

Bad luck on Glubb Pasha that while he was writing his book Colonel Nasser appeared to be hand in glove with the Russians and by the time that it is printed he has become their main enemy. It means epilogues and postscripts to try to get it up to date. Still, no one but a fool would guffaw at him for that, for he had been careful to make clear that he did not pretend to prophesy the details of the future. An admirable and honourable book. Besides the issue of East v. West, capitalist v. communist, Egypt v. Iraq, there is, he thinks, the issue of town dweller v. country dweller, and Glubb Pasha makes it clear that all his sympathies are with the country dweller, though he does not think that he is going to win at any rate in a near future. Then there is also the issue of religion v. materialism. The real evil of communism is its irreligion, and the main fault of the West that it cannot make up its mind what it is that it has to offer. The enemy of materialism, it lets its propaganda be more materialistic than that of its opponents. A very impressive book by one of the few Englishmen who has a real right to lecture us on the Middle East.

— C. H.

Queen Victoria at Windsor and Balmoral. Edited by James Pope-Hennessy. *Allen and Unwin, 12/6*

In June 1889 Princess Vicky of Prussia came to stay with her grandmother, Queen Victoria, to take her mind off the collapse of her projected marriage with Prince Alexander of Battenberg. Every day she exchanged letters with her mother, the widowed Empress; hers, which are collected here with a sympathetic commentary by Mr. Pope-Hennessy and a few linking letters from



the Queen and Empress, have come to light recently in Germany.

Although twenty-three, she wrote as a girl of fourteen might write to-day, uncritically delighted but morbidly emotional. She reports such mild dramas as a pill stuck in the royal windpipe and the gift of a lawn-mower from Uncle Bertie; otherwise she played tennis, terribly stuffy in her heavy mourning, and worried about her weight and her lack of suitors. She was crazy to be married, and her grandmother emerges as wise and affectionate, soothing her girlish anxiety and urging her impetuous mother to be sensible.

— E. O. D. K.

CREDIT BALANCE

The Admen. Shepherd Mead. *Boardman, 15/-*. A book that should interest all concerned with advertising—and some others. It's terse, hard-hitting, but weak in plot. Full of mumbo-jumbo and expertise.

Architecture, U.S.A. Ian McCallum. *Architectural Press, 63/-*. A magnificent compendium of photographs, plans and text illustrating the state of architecture in the U.S.A. to-day. The approach is biographical, the selection (the author says) personal.

Handbook of English Costume in the Nineteenth Century. C. Willett Cunningham and Phillis Cunningham. *Faber, 84/-*. The latest, and last, of the Cunningtons' costume books—an exhaustive survey of nineteenth-century fashion, men's and women's. A bit steep at four guineas, but a volume of great merit.

AT THE THEATRE IN PARIS—I

La Vie Parisienne—*Le Soulier de Satin* (PALAIS-ROYAL)—*Les Possédés* (ANTOINE)—*Les Choutes* (NOUVEAUTÉS)

[*La Vie Parisienne*

Le Baron—PIERRE BERTIN

THE Paris theatre continues to be healthier. At the moment of writing the scoreboard reads: Productions, 47—French 32—English 5—American 5 (Ionesco included in the French side). For those who go to Paris to see native plays this is encouraging, and more cheering still are the signs that serious dramatists are again challenging the invaders.

Since Jean-Louis Barrault lost the Marigny Paris has been a sadder place, and it is good to find his company installed at the refurbished Palais-Royal, too small a house for their range but of the right quality. They have brought back to it *La Vie Parisienne*, which had its first performance there in 1866. Barrault's production is unerring in its comic drive, and it is remarkable how this superb team of straight actors have found such true voices among themselves. Simone Valère, who in charm and wit suggests a gentler Beatrice Lillie, is delicious as the midinette playing at high society, and Pierre Bertin and Jean Desailly are wonderfully funny as the Swedish baron and the man-about-town who pretends to be his guide in Paris. Madeleine Renaud, Barrault and Jean-Pierre Granval have small but telling parts, and Suzy Delair and Jean Parédès have been profitably imported. Splendidly dressed by Jean-Denis Malclès; Offenbach done proud; the cast enormously enjoying themselves. I can remember few happier evenings in the theatre.

They are also doing *Le Soulier de Satin*, Claudel's vast poetic protest against adultery, glorifying the renunciation of the love between a married woman and a Spanish commander at the time of the Empire. For years and years these two go on pining for each other, she shut up in a castle in Mogador and he roaming the world; when at length he finds her again they swear a last farewell before the cross. That is all very fine, except for our discovery that in the meantime she has married her Moorish gaoler, which rather looks as if they have been torturing themselves for nothing. Some of the language is beautiful, and even in the Palais-Royal's constricted space the great sweep of the play gives Barrault opportunities as producer which he seizes

imaginatively. Honegger's music is haunting, and the acting of the principals excellent. Natalie Nerval has taken over the woman's part from Catherine Sellers; she is a sensitive actress with a glowing calm of the spirit. Barrault takes the nervous, quick-striding captain much as he took Colombe; Madeleine Renaud and Simone Valère are good in small parts, and Jean Desailly, though appallingly dressed in blue plastic, manages a guardian angel tactfully. According to your make-up, this is either a noble play (the audience was full of priests), or a great fuss about very little. After three hours and forty minutes I felt crushed by its solemnity.

Les Possédés is a bold and on the whole successful attempt by Albert Camus to compress for the stage Dostoevsky's novel. In a series of short, dramatic scenes he has made of it a large and faithful canvas; it has the weakness of episodic plays, that the tension is too often broken, but it never ceases to be interesting. Camus himself produced, and his affection for the novel shows in the

depth and truth of the characters. He is well served by Michel Bouquet, quietly sinister as Pierre, by Catherine Sellers, terrific as the lame half-wit, by Pierre Vaneck, as the youth self-tortured into evil; and by Alain Mottet, who plays the young man in love with suicide, Tania Balachova as the housekeeper and Pierre Blanchar as the bogus old writer whose absurd death is so affecting. *Les Possédés* is a rich pudding of provincial Russian life in the good old days, of ineffectives, idealists, revolutionaries and crusted Tories, all talking and plotting and driving themselves crazy.

Barillet and Gredy, the authors of *Les Choutes*, must have had sisters and studied them relentlessly, for the three in this nimble light-comedy ring dead true. Françoise (Brigitte Auber) is the responsible one, with a good job and a comfortable bed-sitter, made less so by the arrival of Corinne (Marie Daems), a gold-digger who has left her lover, and Claudie (Dany Saval), a mixed-up child who has run away from school to marry a gangling fifth-form boy. Their loves, squabbles, embarrassments and feline

[*Les Possédés*

Nicolas Stavrogijne—PIERRE VANECK
Pierre Stepanovitch Verkhovensky—MICHEL BOUQUET

stratagems are mercilessly but charmingly observed. In Jean Wall's production the piece is acted with the dexterity which only the French can bring to this sort of trifle. The men, led by Guy Trejan, are as good as the girls, and as a bonus Jeanne Fusier-Gir, half Athene Seyler and half Kathleen Harrison, plays the rusher-in.

— ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PLAY

Othello (MEMORIAL THEATRE, STRATFORD)

Brand (LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

Sugar in the Morning (ROYAL COURT)

IF *Othello* is to have any credibility, Iago must be able to put up a persuasive show of honesty. Sam Wanamaker's Iago at Stratford has all the tricks of a glib salesman so obviously crooked that Othello's reiteration of his virtues begins to strike a note of farce. He is restless and jerky and evasive, and he throws away whole lines of Shakespeare in a forced effort to be natural. This miscasting is serious, and so is that of May Ure as Desdemona, who sinks the dignity of a patrician daughter in a pretty little blonde film star, rather bewildered. I thought she made something of her bedroom scene with Emilia, but with Othello she failed to produce any significant feeling.

These performances are little help to Paul Robeson, whose own is not overwhelming. His Othello is very simple

(though Loudon Sainthill's sets are otherwise attractive) put Desdemona's bedroom aloft, so that one trembled lest Othello throw her overboard, and Emilia, having been stabbed below, has to dash upstairs to die with her mistress?

The only truly Shakespearian performance among the principals was Angela Baddeley's Emilia, and how good it was to hear her lines ringing through the theatre.

The 1959 Theatre Company continues relentlessly to produce what it thinks the public ought to see, and in the case of Ibsen's *Brand* we should be very grateful. This rare early work has been pruned and put into sound prose by Michael Meyer; directed by Michael Elliott it is one of the most powerful plays London has seen for a long time.

Brand is a fanatical priest, as hard as the Old Testament, with a personal mission to save the world. "All or nothing" is his creed; he sacrifices everything to his vision of man reformed. His child dies because he won't move from his church on the sunless side of the fjord, he refuses to shrive his mother, still clinging to her money, as he loses his heartbroken wife. Finally he is stoned after leading his congregation in a crazy ascent of a mountain and an avalanche kills him; repentant, it seems, for his uncompromising life. A voice is heard saying "God is love." I took it to mean that fanatical self-sacrifice was not really the answer.

It is a bleak, horrifying play, fiercely dramatic. Religious lunatics can easily be a bore, but the priest is marvellously acted by Patrick McGoohan, with a nervous intensity that never grows monotonous. In spite of the man's absurdity he keeps part of our sympathy; Mr. McGoohan shows him to be full of frustrated love, and the conflict in him as he drives himself to further cruelties is terrible. This is a performance of great size, in which you forget the actor. Dilys Hamlett skilfully traces the decline of a carefree girl into a crushed, dutiful wife, and Olive McFarland is good as the mad child of the mountains. Patrick Wymark and Peter Sallis bring a healthy

touch of official cynicism. It is a difficult play to produce and Mr. Elliott has done it firmly, with real imagination.

At the Royal Court the curtain rises on a clutch of skeleton bed-sitting-rooms on different levels; *Sugar in the Morning*, by Donald Howarth, is set in a lodging house in a town in the north. It is the fashionable "slice-of-life" sort of play, cut into short episodes, content with a series of character-sketches, and almost without plot. The blunt young doctor, the honeymoon couple, the TV addict, the decent artisan whose silly wife has a black baby, these are well observed but have no dramatic purpose except for their relations with their landlady, who is the hub. Played very well by Margaret Johnston, much in her *Summer and Smoke* manner, she is the young widow of an engine driver and full of social aspirations. Her speech is painfully refined, she flirts affectedly and at the same time is terrified of sex. Kittenish on the surface, she is hard as nails, a Tennessee Williams character transplanted rather unpersuasively to Halifax or Huddersfield or Bootle. Miss Johnston's resource saves her from monotony, but as a play *Sugar in the Morning* is unsatisfactory; only in the last ten minutes, when the disgusted young doctor walks out, is there any dramatic clash. John Fraser, Toke Townley, Jeanne Watts, Frank Finlay and others make the lodgers live, but that is not quite enough.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Long and the Short and the Tall (New—14/1/59), honest war play. *Irma la Douce* (Lyric—23/7/58), French underworld musical. *Fool's Paradise* (Apollo—8/4/59), Cicely Courtneidge shines in crazy farce.

— ERIC KEOWN

REP SELECTION

Theatre Royal, Windsor, *Little Lambs Eat Ivy*, until April 25th.

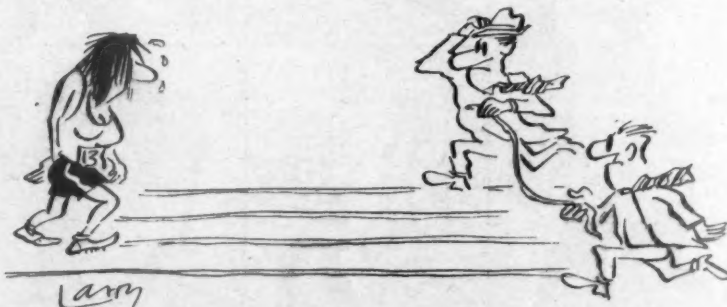
Guildford Rep, *Gigi*, until April 18th.

Colchester Rep, *Jane Eyre*, until April 18th.

Perth Theatre, *The Shop at Sly Corner*, until April 18th.

and straightforward. His voice is magnificent, but in the thunder of its deeper rumbles whole phrases get lost. He is impressive, but as a man, not a leader. He speaks the verse with complete sincerity, but without much music. Remembering the magic of Godfrey Tearle, he seems limited emotionally. To my great disappointment I wasn't moved at all.

Some of the blame for all this must go to Tony Richardson; his production is careless of speech and far too tricky. Hounds in Brabantio's hunt for his daughter are an amusing touch; but why make the Doge a chronic asthmatic, carried from the council chamber like an old wounded crow? Why for Othello's arrival engulf Cyprus in smoke (that leaked into the scene before)? Why play so many scenes in the dark (unless one knew the play, Roderigo's murder would have been meaningless)? And why



PUNCH EXHIBITION

An exhibition of fifty years of *Punch* cinema cartoons and caricatures is on view at the Lewisham Gaumont, by arrangement with the Rank Organisation.

AT THE PICTURES

Eve Wants to Sleep—Goha

HOWEVER unreasonably, I tend to assume that any comedy in films from Eastern Europe will be rather heavy, flat-footed and boisterously corny—aimed (on principle) at the most simple-minded and even childlike audience. The Polish *Eve Wants to Sleep* (Director: T. Chmielewski) was therefore all the more of a delightful surprise. Its fun is in many places of the kind that is usually called "crazy," but—and this is quite rare with "crazy" fun—it has a coherent, thought-out plot, with an absurd logic of its own.

On the surface the piece seems rambling and episodic, being simply based on the efforts of a young girl student to find somewhere to sleep in a strange town (a very strange town indeed). But the episodes prove to be connected much more closely than at first appears. For instance, the hand-grenade the girl casually picks up to hammer her shoe with when she has locked herself in the police armoury reappears naturally enough from her pocket some time later; it is, in a sense, reasonable that the jail-bird safe-cracker borrowed from one police station by another for the occasion of a high officer's visit (because empty cells would suggest inefficiency) should be dressed in police uniform and ordered to pick the lock of the armoury door; and similarly with many other absurdities.

But the absurdities may also be laughed at separately, from moment to moment. Much of the comic detail is in essentials the sort of thing that one finds in the films of Jacques Tati—but

exaggerated just that much more: not on the edge of possibility, but just over it. A device that is used several times in various contexts—and it is a basically funny one, it never seems to fail—is that of making somebody caught in some embarrassing situation bring out, on the spur of the moment, a half-plausible excuse. Looking back, I feel quite ashamed of having laughed at such a line—in a title, of course—as "We're on the night shift," coming from one of two or three men in their underwear discovered among builder's apparatus after hastily retreating from a women's hostel in the middle of the night; but I have to admit I did laugh.

That sounds crude enough, I agree; most of the comedy is much lighter than that, too light for adequate description. The tiny odd effects are arranged so as to help each other along, the succession of them being infinitely funnier than the sum of the fun in each. The girl herself, Eve (Barbara Kwiatowska), is charming, and there are some good comedians among the policemen and law-breakers, but nearly all the laughs come from the calculated placing of well-observed, imaginatively exaggerated effects: in other words, from the writing and direction.

The other feature showing at the Academy (it's even arguable which should be called the *second* feature) is enjoyable too: *Goha* (Director: Jacques Baratier), a Franco-Tunisian co-production. Part of the distinctive flavour of this for us comes from the fact that it is a simple story about simple people made by a highly skilled and sophisticated team.

Its most impressive quality is visual: the Agfacolor photography (Jean Bourgoin) of the Arabian scene—bright, clear, fresh, airy, clean images—gave me great pleasure. Goha (I was interested to note that the name was pronounced something like *Zh-ha*, accent on the second syllable; goodness knows why it should be transliterated in a way that suggests a bark of dismissal) is apparently a legendary figure in the Arab world. He is a friendly, naïve, playful young man whose constant companions are his donkey and a blind lute-player. This picture is concerned mostly with one particular amorous adventure of his with the beautiful young wife of a distinguished philosopher, and in outline it may seem tragic, for neither he nor the girl is alive at the end. But because the atmosphere of the piece is so light and buoyant throughout one hardly takes the deaths seriously: they make a pretty, gently sad conclusion to a graceful little fable. It's an attractive piece altogether.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London: *A Matter of Dignity* (11/3/59) would still be my first recommendation. *Tiger Bay* (8/4/59) should be seen—and not only for the marvellous child Hayley Mills. *The Journey* (1/4/59) is very well done. An excellent performance by Rod Steiger as *Al Capone* (8/4/59). *The Sound and the Fury* (8/4/59), *Carlton-Browne of the F.O.* (18/3/59) and *Gigi* (18/2/59) continue.

Tiger Bay (8/4/59) is also among the releases, but the outstanding one is *Room at the Top* (4/2/59).

— RICHARD MALLETT



Eve—BARBARA KWIATOWSKA

[*Eve Wants to Sleep*]

AT THE BALLET

The Prince of the Pagodas
(COVENT GARDEN)

A COMPLICATED fairy story such as John Cranko's *The Prince of the Pagodas* is none the worse for its obscurities. Fantasies are not for rationalizing, so if the adventures and misadventures of the Emperor of the Middle Kingdom and his two daughters do not make a neat pattern, or if the sinister Salamander later revealed as the Prince who sees justice done and virtue rewarded is more important as a dancer (David Blair) than a character of romance, no ballet lover is likely to complain.

The three-act ballet to Benjamin Britten's lilting score has been greatly improved since it was last seen in London two years ago. Dull patches have gone and the flying machinery borrowed from Christmas pantomime with its too apparent wires and harness has given way to a balletic simulation of flight in which Svetlana Beriosova seems to float above the heads of the crowd on

her mysterious journeys as the sad Princess Belle Rose. This role of the Emperor's younger daughter who has only her beauty and simplicity for her dowry is perfectly suited to Miss Beriosova's gift of poetic interpretation. On the other hand Julia Farron's diamond-like sparkle and hard cutting edge afford the perfect contrast of the elder, heartless, sister Princess Belle Epine.

The work is rich in smaller parts which give great pleasure. Nothing has more completely the virtuoso quality than the dancing in the first act of the four Suitors for the heiress of the Middle Kingdom as in turn they present their credentials. Desmond Doyle, Derek Rencher, Peter Clegg and Gary Burne give dazzling displays of grace and agility with humour inherent.

The tenuous story is fortunately interspersed liberally with *divertissements* which reach a brilliant climax in a *pas-de-six* in which Annette Page and Bryan Ashbridge are outstanding. The only truly human character, that of the Fool, is charmingly acted rather than danced by Graham Usher.

No hands have been more masterly in creating the atmosphere of fantasy than those of John Piper and Desmond Heeley, the designers respectively of scenery and costume. It is a pleasure to welcome a revival which comes with much of freshness and excitement of a new work.

— C. B. MORTLOCK

ON THE AIR

In and Out of Costume

THE BBC have greeted the spring with, among other things, A. R. Rawlinson's serialization of a book called *The Infamous John Friend*, by Mrs. R. S. Garnett. I have not read this work, which would seem to be a fairly rousing historical romance, but to judge by the opening instalment I would think that we are in for quite an entertaining time. This in spite of the fact that I cannot remember an opening instalment in which so little of consequence happened in the space of half an hour's viewing time. I suspect that we have here a story of character, as much as of routine swashbuckling; and the presence of William Pitt among the characters promises to add a spice of apparent authenticity. How ready we are to accept a writer's portrayal of notable historical persons off duty! How many of us see Charles Laughton when we think of Henry VIII! The serial is produced by Chloe Gibson, who handled a tricky outdoor scene at Brighton very deftly despite a chocolate-box atmosphere created by eye-catching costumes and an intensely stacy exit performed by Kathleen Williams. Actors are trained to behave correctly in costume in the theatre, but the television screen demands some modification of stage movement.



William Pitt—MANNING WILSON

John Friend—WILLIAM LUCAS

Theatrical illusion is not the same as television-drama illusion: this must be borne in mind in every single department. William Lucas and Margaret Tyzack appear perfectly at home both in their parts and in their costumes. Mr. Lucas wears in all his work a knowing smile which hints of secrets yet to be divulged: in a spy story this seems especially appropriate.

Tommy Trinder is scheduled to start a regular series in June, and the other week we saw what might be called a preliminary canter, entitled "Steppin' Out with Trinder" (BBC). For once I was on the side of the studio audience, which for the most part received the star's comedy efforts (and he worked very hard) with a kind of encouraging silence. I believe Mr. Trinder used to be an amusing performer on the variety stage. If this is so, I hope for his own sake that he revives some of his old material for the forthcoming series.

A television critic defended Miss Gladys Cooper's fluffs and paraphrases in the extraordinary version of "A Day By the Sea" offered some weeks ago by ATV, by explaining that if she had been playing on the stage her blunders would not have been noticed. There may be truth in this, but I cannot see how it is relevant. I myself am reasonably certain that if Luton Town had been playing cricket during the F.A. Challenge Cup competition, they would never have reached the final. In fact, as is well known, they were playing soccer, which is a very different matter.

Television drama continues to twitch uncertainly in what must be its birth-pangs (for there is still no successfully established school of writers in the field, and only a handful of more than competent producers). The hectic muddle was well illustrated on the night when the BBC gave us an almost perfect rendering of "The Small Back Room"—

cast thoughtfully, acted and produced with a most pleasing natural finish, and intelligently scripted by John Hopkins—and five minutes later ABC wasted a large supply of electricity on an ugly, melodramatic lump of pretentious stodge called "The Angry Flower." Miss Gwen Watford played a leading part in this, and showed once again her distressing tendency to overact in close-up. I understand her work is very popular, which seems to prove that most people like to see that their actors are really acting. The play itself was another of the "socially significant" dramas so beloved of Channel 9 planners. Social significance is getting to be a dangerous red herring: it is surely no excuse for characters hastily cut from flabby cardboard, plots that would only be barely tolerable in a routine thick-ear series, dialogue richly encrusted with clichés, or patently obvious "messages" that have been delivered so often they are becoming dog-eared.

— HENRY TURTON

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Motor If You Must

By J. B. BOOTHROYD



6 Passenger Problems

Further thoughts on becoming a modern highwayman

PASSENGERS come in two styles, casual and regular; the picked-up pedestrian and the family member who climbs in beside you as of right. I find it hard to advise on which is the greater rouser of passions at the wheel.

One consoling thought is that the casual class passes out of your life in the very early stages of your owner-driver-ship: compassion for the foot-slogger is among the most transient of motoring emotions, and psychologists, in their off-hand way, ascribe it to a normal guilt-from-wealth complex, giving it about three weeks from onset to complete cure. The condition can recur spasmodically during public transport strikes, but in a milder form, when the patient is able to stick "LIFTS AT YOUR OWN RISK" on his windscreen without the slightest sense of self-disgust.

Taking pity on pedestrians—while it lasts—involves you in a fierce moral struggle against the twin sins of patronage and anger. The uprush of superiority as you lean over and throw open the door to a drenched bus-queue is as hard to fight as the suffusing fury that takes its place when none of them will get in . . . the blasts of hooting from behind being, in fact, their bus. This is one reason why so many clergy prefer to ride a bicycle and safeguard their immortal soul.

You will soon learn to leave bus-stops alone when hunting for liftees—and you *will* hunt, just at first; this is a simple fact of life. The greatest danger lies in wait for the new motorist living in a new district. On his first drive to the station he sees a lonely figure by the roadside, female, muffled against the east wind, stamping her little feet for warmth. It is the work of a moment to apply the brakes, skid sharply, stall the engine, halt at an angle of forty-five degrees to the kerb and proffer the

speed and comfort of private transport. Your conversation as you start the wipers instead of the engine is gay; her appreciation is touching, even though her bus roars past while you are still confusing her ankle with the hand-brake. What is yet to emerge is that (a) she is the notorious local blonde of whom your wife has already heard much through the daily woman and (b) she is there by the roadside six mornings a week. The situation, at best, can only lead to your catching later trains in future and getting the bird, or even the sack, at the office; at worst, because of a quixotic gallantry which impels you to repeat the small courtesy day by day, it may mean a choice between a broken home and leaving the neighbourhood.

It is advisable, then, as long as the phase of lift-mindedness lasts, to concentrate on the walking pedestrian. But prepare for disappointments. Ministry of Transport records show that of every twelve persons seemingly eligible for lifts only one will accept the offer. The remaining eleven are disposed as follows:

- 2 Just reached own front door
- 2 Deaf, tell you the time
- 3 Distrust your car
- 2 Distrust you

- 1 Waiting for pub to open
- 1 Walking to cure hiccups

Moreover, the solitary acceptor is capable of throwing up a variety of problems. He may be

- (a) Of a weak and nervous nature, travelling two miles before mustering the courage to explain that he really wants to go the other way, and had momentarily retraced his steps at the time of your offer, as he thought he had seen a ten-shilling note in the gutter but it turned out to be an ice-cream paper. This type will sit uncomplainingly on any parcel you have forgotten to move from the passenger seat, such as a pound of butter or a briefcase containing a replacement sherry glass.
- (b) A co-driver. That is, he repeatedly operates an imaginary brake-pedal, sways his body as you round corners, like a bowls-player seeking to exert telepathic influences on a dispatched wood, utters small, semi-apologetic cries at the sight of a distant hazard, and infringes your prerogative of abusing other road-users.
- (c) Presumptuous with the fittings. He uses the ash-tray which you have long learnt to regard as pure ornament, leans over to de-mist your section of the screen, thus obscuring vision at vital moments, attempts to adjust the seat, stealthily opens his window to admit alarming near-side echoes of the engine: this may lead you to pull perilously to the right, under the impression that you are being overtaken on the left by a tram.
- (d) A door-banger, who goes out of your life for ever before you notice the cracks in the glass.
- (e) A man you know and hate, craftily disguised in a new overcoat.



(f) A motorist in his own right, posing as a pedestrian. He accepts your bounty from mere fellow-feeling, knowing what frustrations you have suffered in the other eleven categories. He only has to go 300 yards, to where his own car is parked. His amused contemplation of your battered bodywork, queasy steering and ragged upholstery only hits you fully when you put him down and see him step delicately into a forty-foot limousine with gold wheels and a chauffeur at the salute.

After one experience of (f) you will adopt a vigorous self-disparagement technique for all future lift operations; this not only spikes the guns of a passenger who privately supposes you to be on your way to the breaker's yard, but has the added advantages of getting rid of him in record time and providing a ready theme for small-talk:

YOU: I don't suppose you'd care to risk your neck in this pile of rubbish?

PASS.: Are you talking to me?

YOU: I said hop in, I'll give you a lift.

I'm afraid the door has a hinge off.

PASS.: Very kind, I'm sure. (*Hops in*).

YOU (*crashing about in the gear-box*):

You may hear a series of explosions.

Something's come adrift underneath.

PASS.: Sorry, I didn't quite catch that?

YOU: If you sit on the edge of the seat you don't feel the broken spring.

Actually, this car shouldn't be on the road at all.

Try not to put your weight on the floorboards or you may go through.

Can you smell burning?

PASS.: If you could drop me here, that's fine.

YOU: But I haven't got her going yet.

I think the differential's packed up.

PASS.: All the same. And thanks. (*Gets out and runs.*)

This approach will do you a last, invaluable service in acquainting you with the liftee in the unspeakable (g) class, the man who joins wholeheartedly in your campaign of denigration. He not only agrees with you that the shock-absorbers are done for, the draughts piercing and the engine an affront to the proud tradition of internal combustion; he gets ahead of you, wagging the loose hinges of the glove compartment, picking at the piping, banging the instrument panel with his fist until the dials pop out on their stalks, asking what you paid for the car, telling you that you were swindled, advising you to sue, and offering you the name and address of a friend high up in the Board of Trade. It is the (g) man, more than all the rest



"Do you mind?" I'm trying to find an oil leak."

put together, who hastens your cure of compassion. It is he, all unknowingly, who launches you into the long, happy years of lift-free motoring. Your conscience is clear. You have tried to help suffering humanity, and suffering humanity wouldn't have it. For the future you will find some more rewarding outlet for your finer instincts; youth clubs, wild-life preservation, or the organization of flag-days. As for the empty seat beside you, that crippled old lady carrying a kitchen table can wave her handbag at you in vain. Drive on. If witnesses should later tax you with lack of feeling, your answer is that she was undoubtedly the decoy for an armed hold-up, and that you have your wife and family to think of.

As a motorist you will, in fact, think of your wife and family most of the time. They will go about with you a good deal more than they did. When you think how difficult it was in the old days to talk them into a mere two-mile tramp across the fields it seems incredible that they will now accompany you on great expeditions of twenty miles and upwards without complaining. It is not even necessary to talk them into it. Open the garage door and they're into it of their own accord. The problem is to keep them out of it. It is surprising that the sociologists, constant preachers of the family as the stabilizer of human society, have not made more public fuss of the motor-car, serving as it does to bring families closer together than ever before, particularly in the smaller models. It is possible, however, that their surveys show disappointing results; that prolonged propinquity in a hot tin box, wedged in a jam just outside Worthing, is not, after all, the recipe for happy home life; that, as a matter of fact, many more divorces spring from a nice run down to the sea, with spouses elbow to elbow in the front and the little ones beating each other with iced lollies in the back, than from the giving of lifts to notorious blondes by motorists who have left their loved ones at home.

Should this be indeed true, then it is up to the motoring organizations to see

that it receives the publicity it deserves; this would give them something to do, now that they have virtually stopped returning membership fees in the form of salutes.*

As you will soon become convinced, the ideal motoring state is the solitary state, in which you can go as fast as possible, with all the windows shut, the radio giving out with Count Basie, no remarks about the driving, and a destination, if any, of supreme unimportance. Also only hooting if you feel like it, and not on demand. Motorists of a religious turn see their heaven in these terms. But that is a long way off. A resolve to talk your wife and family into a single-seater bubble-car on economy grounds is a poor substitute, though one which is catching on more and more. The truth is that four people in one car all want to travel at different speeds and in different directions. Ruling out a collision at a cross-roads there is no practicable way of arranging this, and any compromise can only result in four independent sets of sulks and a sharp output of emotional energy. The family at home playing cribbage and the owner-driver forty miles off on a tasty stretch of dual carriageway is a much better arrangement all round.

*Spokesmen say that, as almost everyone is a member now, saluting has become more or less meaningless, but there are proposals to give salutes to the rare non-members, though in a modified form.

The designer of the one-man car knew a thing or two about family life; it was disappointing to hear that he is not, after all, to be co-opted on to the Marriage Guidance Council.

Road accident figures are broken down in practically all directions but one: the family element is ignored. They show at a glance how many cyclists between 45 and 50 are knocked down by trailer caravans after dark on an average Tuesday, but there isn't a word on the number of traffic islands demolished as a result of boys between 10 and 12 bawling "Pass him, dad. Now, NOW!" in the driver's ear. A section should be opened up showing plate-glass window casualties caused by a man braking at the sudden, overpowering smell of molten amyl-acetate; by the time he's traced this to the nails being varnished in the adjoining seat it's too late. And how many dramatic somersaults into ploughed fields begin with eager injunctions to look at (a) the lovely sunset through the back window, (b) Mrs. Foster's hat, or (c) ash all over your trousers again?

A few figures along these lines, for universal distribution addressed to "The Lady of the House," might do wonders to restore the motorist to solitary bliss. Otherwise there is little to be done about the passenger menace. Except, of course, to leave motoring alone.

Next Week: The Social Side



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